EARLY JUDAISM AND ITS LITERATURE

Seeking the Favor of God

Volume 3, The Impact of Penitential Prayer beyond Second Temple Judaism

Edited by

Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk,
and Rodney A. Werline

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
AzTh	Arbeiten zur Theologie
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CRINT	Compendium rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
EBib	Etudes bibliques
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HeyJ	*Heythrop Journal*
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MGWJ	*Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OCP	*Orientalia christiana periodica*
OrChr	*Oriens christianus*
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
SBLAcBib	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SJ	Studia Judaica
STAC	Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity
STDJ	Studies on Texts from the Desert of Judah
TP	*Theologie und Philosophie*

TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Preface

Over the course of two years at the close of this past century (1998, 1999) four volumes were published in the field of Second Temple Judaism that considered in varying degrees texts and issues related to penitential prayer. Their appearance suggested that the study of this form of prayer was of interest within the academic guild, but unfortunately the simultaneous character of their publication meant that there was little room for interaction between the works. It was this that brought together a group of five, Richard Bautch, Mark Boda, Daniel Falk, Judith Newman, and Rodney Werline, to facilitate discussion on this topic at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature for a three-year period from 2003 to 2005. Participation in the consultation was open to all members of the SBL. While papers were invited for the thematic session each year to ensure coverage of that year's focus, an open session provided opportunity for any consultation member to contribute. The hope was that the sessions would facilitate interaction about past contributions, showcase new and fresh ideas, as well as synthesize the results that had been gained so far in the study of these prayers. It was also hoped that this would encourage dialogue among scholars working in areas related to Second Temple Judaism, but isolated by other disciplinarian lines (Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Second Temple literature, New Testament, post-70 C.E. Judaism, early Christianity). Each year the consultation invited a senior scholar who had worked extensively in the field to set the recent work in the broader scholarly context, to offer a critical review, and to provide trajectories for future research.

One of the key goals of the consultation from its inception was the publication of the best of its papers, with the focus of the volumes on the themes of the three years of the consultation (Origin, Development, Impact). The present volume is the third in this series and focuses on the impact of penitential prayer beyond the Second Temple period.

In the first chapter, Richard Sarason surveys the major areas of impact of penitential traditions that developed in the Second Temple period on the subsequent developments in rabbinic Judaism. The rabbis are especially concerned to define the appropriate occasions and contexts for penitence, and so Sarason pays particular attention to the rhetorical strategies of penitence and the contexts in which they are used, including non-verbal as well as verbal expressions. He finds that in the early rabbinic liturgy, penitence is a relatively minor motif in the daily communal prayers (i.e., in the Amidah), but that penitential rhetoric is primarily

restricted to two settings: occasions of extreme need at communal fast days and in private prayers. This is in general continuity with what is found in the Second Temple period with the exception of Qumran, where the community viewed the world in a state of constant crisis. From this graded approach to penitence focusing on occasions of need, penitential motifs were increasingly incorporated into elements surrounding the daily Shema and Amidah, especially under the influence of pietistic and mystical movements. In a valuable set of appendices, Sarason provides texts and translations for the relevant prayers.

Ruth Langer, in the following chapter, examines in greater depth the personal supplications that follow the daily Amidah, known as the *taḥanun* prayers. These developed on the periphery of the formal public prayers, received little regulation by early rabbis, and are widely divergent in regional rites. The stable elements agree with the evidence from liturgical manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah in pointing to an early core of three parts: confession of sins, plea for forgiveness, and a collection of biblical verses beginning "we do not know what to do." Langer argues that the earliest discernible stage was therefore a penitential liturgy that originated as private supplications became part of public prayer. Langer provides extensive appendices with texts and translations of the prayers from Cairo Genizah manuscripts.

In the third chapter, Reuven Kimelman provides a careful analysis of the penitential motif in the weekday Amidah, giving it somewhat more prominence there than Sarason does. He argues that blessings 4–7 for knowledge, repentance, forgiveness, and deliverance form a unit concerning personal redemption similar to the pattern of penitential prayer. On the basis of both the sequence of petitions and an examination of the biblical allusions, he concludes that the seventh blessing concerns individual rather than national redemption, and logically follows from the forgiveness of blessing 6. Blessing 5 emphasizes the centrality of Torah and prayer in the return to God. He considers but rejects the view of Ezra Fleischer that blessings 4–9 originated as a sequence about the rehabilitation of Israel after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.

Stefan Reif also investigates the Amidah, in the fourth chapter, to consider in detail the evolution of the prayer for forgiveness, against the background of antecedent materials and considering the history of its religious meaning. He argues that there was a tendency toward greater use of biblical style and language, increasing emphasis on repentance, and expanded use of epithets for God. An early formulation around the end of the first century may have been as simple as "Forgive us for we have sinned. Blessed be You, O Lord, who consistently grants forgiveness." Once the parallel petition was established, as in Saadiah's formulation—"Forgive us, our Father, that we have sinned, and pardon us, our King, that we have done wrong"—there is a tendency to find distinct theological meaning in each phrase.

Laura Lieber next turns to issues of aesthetics, discussing the relationship of form and function in the development of penitential poetry in the synagogue, from the *seliḥot* (prayers seeking pardon) and *vidduyim* (confessions) to the full

poetry of the early *piyyuṭim*. These were composed first for communal fast days and the High Holidays and later for Sabbaths and festivals; eventually they were extended to other occasions. She highlights three features: listing techniques, especially using biblical passages, historical précis, and divine attributes; acrostics and other structuring devices; and intertextuality. The latter includes not only midrashic use of Scripture but also use of already established synagogue prayers and poems. This study draws special attention to the dynamic tension between tradition and innovation that is characteristic of the synagogue liturgy. An appendix provides key texts and translations.

In the sixth chapter, Lawrence Fine describes the role of penitential traditions in sixteenth-century kabbalistic movements, with the most prominent center in the Galilean village of Safed. These shared a deep consciousness of collective and personal sinfulness that is responsible not only for a continuing exile of the Jewish people but also for exile of the Shekinah, the female dimension of divinity. Penitence was the urgent means of cleansing the soul, restoring the rupture in the Godhead, and bringing about the messianic age. Penitential practices include wandering about in self-exile to imitate the humiliation of the exiled Shekinah and to provide it a dwelling in exile; midnight vigils to mourn the Temple's destruction and one's sin; ascetic practices with regard to food, drink, and sexual pleasure; extensive fasting; and self-mortification including flagellation. Isaac Luria, the most famous teacher, adopted a medical model: as physician of soul, he would diagnose the individual's transgressions by physical observation and prescribe appropriate acts of penance. Fine illustrates the theories and practices and traces influence from the ascetic practices of German Jewish pietists (Hasidei Ashkenaz) of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the thirteenth-century Spanish Kabbalah of the Zohar.

In his essay on penitential prayer traditions in the New Testament, Rodney Werline focuses on *logia* in Q (including the Lord's Prayer), Paul's arguments in Romans 1–3 and Galatians, and the references to confession of sins in 1 John 1 and James 5. While Werline recognizes that no New Testament text explicitly cites or quotes at length a penitential prayer like those in Second Temple Jewish literature, he nevertheless detects the lingering influence of penitential prayer traditions on the above-mentioned texts. The Q material especially shares the theme of the rejection of the prophets with the penitential prayer tradition. Influences of penitential traditions appear in Paul as he talks about the covenant, sin, the law, and the deuteronomic curses. Werline also notes the lingering language of the *Gerichtsdoxologie* in 1 John 1. According to Werline, the lack of penitential prayer in second- and third-century Christianity may have resulted from a cultural shift within the church in which the church moved from being primarily a Jewish to being primarily a Gentile phenomenon. Christians in these centuries turned the language of the rejected prophets, sin, and the endangered (or broken) covenant into arguments for supersessionism.

Paul Bradshaw notes that there are only a few references to regular penitential prayer in early Christianity, those in 1 John 5:16; Jas 5:16; the *Didache,* and

1 Clem. 52. Not until the third century do the references to penitential prayer begin to increase. However, the influence of the monastic movements appears significant. With pressures and persecutions from the state having vanished, some Christians became worried that the church was growing lax. Thus, for example, Basil of Caesarea directs his community to say a daily prayer of repentance in the evening service, as does Pseudo-Athanasius. The fourth century also testifies to the daily use of portions of Psalm 51 in the morning prayer, though much time will pass before the practice is somewhat universal. Surprisingly, penitential prayers are almost entirely lacking in eucharistic rites in both East and West until the ninth or tenth centuries. He argues that this probably resulted from observing Sunday as a day of celebration of creation, since the liturgy for Sunday replaces the daily penitential prayer with a hymn to creation. These data lead Bradshaw back to monasticism as perhaps the most important influence on the inclusion and development of penitential prayer in the regular services of the church.

Carsten Claussen entertains the question why the *Didache* contains no penitential prayer even though the community placed so much emphasis on confessing one's sins. His recognition that the directions to confess one's sins before taking the Lord's Supper are in the singular form (*Did.* 4:14) leads him to conclude that these early Christians may have confessed their sins individually to one another or aloud in the public worship. They did so not because they understood the Lord's Supper to be a sacrifice but because each individual functioned as sacrifice, an idea present in some Jewish texts and in Paul and 1 Peter as well. Coupled with the exhortations in the *Manual of the Two Ways* (*Did.* 1–6), the confession of sin rejoined any who had not lived up to the ideal to the community of worshipers. Claussen concludes that these features of the *Didache* resemble New Testament texts, but demonstrate little impact from the Second Temple Jewish penitential prayer traditions.

Bryan D. Spinks examines a Syrian rite called *Taksa d'Hussaya*, "The Book of Purification," in order to analyze its content and structure, and what relationships might exist between this penitential rite and Old Testament penitential texts. He also gives attention to the *Didascalia*, Aphrahat the Persian Sage, St. Ephrem, Narsai, and *The Teaching of the Pearl.* The investigation reveals the importance of Psalm 51 in the development and wording of penitential practices in the Syrian church. Further, the Old Testament appears to serve as the rationale for the need of penitential actions. In the conclusion, Spinks notes the connection between the Syrian church and Judaism and wonders if the penitential practices may have developed in part in response to knowledge and interaction with the synagogue.

Robert R. Phenix Jr. and Cornelia B. Horn examine penitential prayers in the Byzantine traditions, concentrating especially on the earliest representations of the prayers in the Church Prayer Book, the *Euchologion*. These prayers place their penitential statements alongside allusions to David and Manasseh, who for the petitioner serve as precedents of God's forgiveness. Other traditions add Peter and the adulterous woman as examples of penitents. In the eleventh century, lan-

guage from the Psalms is added to the prayer tradition, a tendency traceable to early Second Temple Jewish penitential traditions, of which Baruch is an example. The *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula of Edessa (d. 436) contain about forty hymns entitled "On Repentance." Placed in the Western Syriac breviary, these hymns utilize characters from the Synoptic Gospels as models of repentance and also draw on the Psalms for their language. In using biblical figures in this manner, the Byzantine texts display tendencies similar to Second Temple Jewish prayers, which also rely on biblical characters as models. The *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* and *the Hymn of Kassianē* in the Byzantine tradition exemplify similar traits. Through their analysis of Byzantine texts and their comparisons of their finding with Second Temple Jewish texts, Phenix and Horn conclude that the early Jewish prayers provided important formal, structural, and rhetorical elements for the Eastern church's prayers.

Richard Sarason concludes the volume with an Afterword, interacting with the individual and collective contributions to the volume. With his mature perspective on the topic, Sarason thus frames the volume as a whole, providing integrity and closure to the discussion while suggesting further trajectories for reflection and research. We would like to express our special thanks to Richard for his supportive participation in the consultation as well as the volume. His patient and wise counsel to an editorial team with little expertise in this field beyond Second Temple Judaism was exemplary. Furthermore, we are thankful to all of the other contributors to the present work who have been patient with the editorial team as the volume took shape over the past few years.

There are others, however, outside the consultation we would like to thank for their help on this volume. As editor of the SBLEJL series and as a member of the steering committee for the Penitential Prayer Consultation at SBL, Judith Newman has offered many helpful suggestions and direction in the course of our editorial work on this volume. We are thankful for her friendship and careful editorial eye.

Thanks are also due to Leigh Andersen, Bob Buller, and the publishing staff at the Society of Biblical Literature for guiding us through the editorial process. In addition, we are grateful for the careful work of Paul Kobelski at The HK Scriptorium for his patient endurance in the copyediting stage. Finally, we are thankful for the Society of Biblical Literature, without whom this book and the foundational consultations would have been impossible. Our hope is that these volumes will be but a springboard for further reflection and scholarship on this rich tradition of prayer.

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The Persistence and Trajectories of Penitential Prayer in Rabbinic Judaism

Richard S. Sarason

My invited task in this chapter is to provide an analytical overview of the trajectories of the penitential prayer tradition in rabbinic Judaism, as an introduction to this third and final volume of papers generated by the three-year Consultation on Penitential Prayer held at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature between 2003 and 2005.[1] The papers in this volume all deal with the impact of this tradition, which began in the early Second Commonwealth period, on the development of prayer and worship in Judaism and Christianity after 70 C.E. An additional goal of this chapter is to bring together some of the methodological and thematic threads from the previous volumes' papers and indicate their bearing on the materials in the present volume. That, in fact, is where I wish to begin.

Many of the papers in the previous volumes have, appropriately to my mind, problematized the concept of genre in reference to the notion of "penitential" prayers. Genre, to begin with, is an ideal type, and genre analysis (form criticism) too often reifies abstracts. In analyzing the actual, concrete prayers, it focuses somewhat obsessively on departures from what is, after all, a theoretical norm, constructed in this case on the basis of four instances in the Hebrew Bible (the so-called basic four: Ezra 9:5–15; Neh 1:4–11; Neh 9:4–10:40; and Dan 9:3–19).[2] Eileen Schuller, for example, has rightly noted the problem of identifying the corpus of penitential prayers in Second Commonwealth literature and delimiting its parameters, precisely because of the rhetorical fluidity of this material vis-à-vis Rodney Werline's initially proposed definition of the genre.[3] Similarly, Esther

1. The first two volumes are Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline, eds., *Seeking the Favor of God,* vol. 1: *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2006) and vol. 2: *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2007).

2. See in particular the contributions of Samuel E. Balentine, "'I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask,'" in Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God*, 1:1–20, and "Afterword," 193–204; and of Mark J. Boda, "Form Criticism in Transition: Penitential Prayer and Lament, *Sitz im Leben* and Form," 1:181–92.

3. Eileen Schuller, "Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: A Research Survey," in

Chazon, writing on *The Words of the Luminaries* (*Dibrê Hame'orot*) found at Qumran, identifies penitential *elements* and rhetoric in this liturgy, which do not in each instance manifest all the components of Werline's definition.[4] Most trenchantly, David Lambert, in a paper presented at the 2005 Consultation session but not included in the present volume,[5] notes how the influence of the perspectives of form criticism and traditio-historical criticism on the initial framing of this Consultation's discourse has been somewhat constricting, lending itself also to questionable evolutionary schemas. He instead proposes a broader phenomenological investigation, a perspective that I also endorse. His thesis that confession can usefully be construed as a specific *rhetorical* strategy within the larger context of petitionary prayer will have implications for our discussion below of the occasions on which penitential rhetoric is deployed in rabbinic prayer. Other papers in the second volume, notably those of Daniel Falk, Rodney Werline, Bilhah Nitzan, and Judith Newman, also have usefully focused on the *contexts* in which penitential rhetoric is deployed in the prayers found in the Second Commonwealth literature.[6]

As we move to the liturgy and occasional prayers of rabbinic Judaism in late antiquity, we indeed deal with the identification of *occasions* and *contexts* deemed to be appropriate for the deployment of penitential rhetoric, either in passing or at great length. This rhetoric and its corresponding vocabulary derive from the biblical texts and traditions that were catalogued in the first volume of these studies. But, just as Daniel Falk has pointed out in the second volume with regard to the deployment of the biblical models at Qumran, so, too, in the case of the rabbis we no longer deal with awareness of distinct traditio-historical backgrounds, but simply with a mosaic of scriptural quotations and allusions.[7]

Several caveats need to be rehearsed when we are discussing early rabbinic liturgy. First, as is well known, we have no full written texts of the standard

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Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God*, 2:1–15, and "Afterword," 227–37, responding to Rodney A. Werline, "Defining Penitential Prayer," 1:xiii–xvii; but see now also Rodney A. Werline, "Reflections on Penitential Prayer: Definition and Form," 2:209–25.

4. Esther G. Chazon, "The *Words of the Luminaries* and Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Times," in Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God*, 2:177–86.

5. David A. Lambert, "Reconsidering the 'Penitence' in Penitential Prayer," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Penitential Prayer Consultation, Philadelphia, Pa., November 20, 2005. The issues raised by Lambert in this paper are discussed also in his Ph.D. dissertation, "Topics in the History of Repentance: From the Hebrew Bible to Early Judaism and Christianity," Harvard University, 2004, a revised version of which will soon be published.

6. Daniel K. Falk, "Scriptural Inspiration for Penitential Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God*, 2:127–57; Rodney A. Werline, "Prayer, Politics, and Social Vision in Daniel 9," 2:17–32; Bilhah Nitzan, "Traditional and Atypical Motifs in Penitential Prayers from Qumran," 2:187–208; Judith H. Newman, "The Form and Settings of the Prayer of Manasseh," 2:105–25.

7. Falk, "Scriptural Inspiration," 143.

liturgical rubrics until the early Islamic period, specifically until the second half of the ninth century C.E., when Amram ben Sheshna, the head (perhaps) of the Babylonian rabbinical academy at Sura, sent a responsum to the Jewish community of Barcelona (?), Spain, in which he listed all of the prayer texts, prayer rules, and customs endorsed by the two Babylonian rabbinical academies. This responsum, which came to be known as the *Seder Rav Amram*, is the first comprehensive, freestanding prayer manual in the history of rabbinic Judaism. It was widely diffused and recopied with the result that its prayer texts were heavily interpolated and "corrected" to conform to those used in the copyists' communities. So our earliest recorded prayer texts themselves often reflect a still later usage.[8]

Second, because the talmudic literature refers to most of the standard prayers only with reference to their topics, their opening words, their closing benedictory formulas, and (occasionally) a passing phrase of their verbal content, we do not know to what extent, or how early, the mishnaic and talmudic prayer texts were verbally fixed or whether they remained somewhat fluid in their formulation, nor do we know to what extent the earliest extant prayer texts conform verbally to their talmudic predecessors—whether full texts have been reasonably well transmitted from the talmudic period, or whether these represent later verbal settings based on the talmudic rules and phrases. Different scholars (most notably, Joseph Heinemann and Ezra Fleischer) have read the evidence differently based, in part, on their own presuppositions about the possibility of fluid versus fixed prayer texts in the periods of the Mishnah and Talmuds.[9] The issue is relevant to

8. For a thorough account of the historical development of Jewish worship, prayer, and liturgy, see Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). On *Seder Rav Amram*, see pp. 122–52 there, as well as Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 191–93. Brody there questions whether Amram was in fact the head of the Sura academy at this time or of a breakaway faction. He examines the issue at length in his Hebrew article, "Rav Amram bar Sheshna—Ge'on Sura?" *Tarbiz* 56 (1987): 327–43. The tortuous transmission history, interpolations, and rewriting of prayer texts in *Seder Rav Amram* are discussed in Brody's Hebrew article, "Leḥidat ʿarikato shel *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*," in *Kenesset Ezra: Literature and Life in the Synagogue. Studies Presented to Ezra Fleischer* (ed. Shulamit Elizur, Moshe David Herr, Gershon Shaked, and Avigdor Shinan; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 21–34. The best edition of *Seder Rav Amram* is that of E. Daniel Goldschmidt, *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1971). The first two parts of the work, dealing with weekday and Sabbath prayers, also appear in editions with English translations: David Hedegård, *Seder R. Amram Gaon,* part 1, *Hebrew Text with Critical Apparatus; Translation with Notes and Introduction* (Lund: Lindstedt, 1951); and Tryggve Kronholm, *Seder R. Amram Gaon,* part 2, *The Order of Sabbath Prayer; Text Edition with an Annotated English Translation and Introduction* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974).

9. Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (trans. Richard S. Sarason; SJ 9; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977); Ezra Fleischer, "On the Beginnings of Obligatory Hebrew Prayer" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 59 (1990): 397–441; idem, "The Shemone Esre: Its Character, Internal Order, Content and Goals" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 62 (1993): 179–223; idem, "Reply to Stefan Reif" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 60 (1991): 683–88; and idem, "On the Origins of the *ʿAmidah*: Response

our discussion because we find in the Talmuds, for example, only the beginning phrases of various confessional formulas for the Day of Atonement, with full versions appearing only in the later, medieval orders of prayer.

Having noted these caveats, let us turn now to our discussion of the deployment of penitential rhetoric in rabbinic liturgy and prayers. Most noteworthy in this regard is the restriction of this style, in early rabbinic prayer, to very specific contexts, namely, those of extreme need. It is confined primarily to communal liturgies for fast days (particularly the Day of Atonement, when it is utilized heavily) and private prayers. It does not figure prominently in the rabbinic thrice-daily communal prayer of petition, the Tefillah or Amidah.[10] Thematically, the weekday Tefillah is a kind of omnibus petitionary sequence dealing with the corporate needs of Israel and the individual Jew—for health and sustenance, but particularly for national restoration and redemption from exile. Fully half of the twelve weekday petitions elaborate the redemptive scenario. Nonetheless, penitential rhetoric makes a brief, somewhat low-key appearance at the beginning of the petitionary sequence.[11] Moshe Weinfeld has pointed out that the topics of the first three petitions—for discernment or understanding that leads to following God's ways, for repentance, and for forgiveness—figure together as a thematic cluster in several prayers from Qumran, in the *Testament of Levi,* in the "penitential" Ps 51, and in some of the prophetic literature (Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel).[12] However, in the rabbinic Amidah the penitential note is

to Ruth Langer," *Prooftexts* 20 (2000): 380–84. For reactions to Fleischer's article, see Stefan Reif, "Response to Ezra Fleischer's Article" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 60 (1991): 677–81; Reuven Kimelman, "The Literary Structure of the Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," in *The Echoes of Many Texts: Reflections on Jewish and Christian Traditions. Essays in Honor of Lou H. Silberman* (ed. William G. Dever and J. Edward Wright; BJS 313; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 171–218; Ruth Langer, "Revisiting Early Rabbinic Liturgy: The Recent Contributions of Ezra Fleischer," *Prooftexts* 19 (1999): 179–204; eadem, "Considerations of Method: A Response to Ezra Fleischer," *Prooftexts* 20 (2000): 384–87; Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 153–59; and note the remarks of Joseph Tabory, "Introduction," in *From Qumran to Cairo: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer* (ed. Joseph Tabory; Jerusalem: Orhot, 1999), English section, 6.

10. Tefillah (Aramaic: *ṣeluta'*) is the designation for this petitionary rubric in early rabbinic literature. In medieval literature it is referred to by Sefardim (Jews living in Islamic countries, including Iberia) as the Amidah, because it is recited in a standing posture. Ashkenazim (Jews living in central, later in eastern, Europe) referred to this rubric as the Shemoneh Esre, because it originally comprised eighteen benedictions on weekdays (the petitionary middle benedictions are omitted on Sabbaths and festivals). See Appendix 1.

11. See further the discussions of Reuven Kimelman, "The Penitential Part of the Amidah and Personal Redemption" (pp. 71–84 below), and Stefan C. Reif, "The Amidah Benediction on Forgiveness: Links between Its Theology and Its Textual Evolution" (pp. 85–98 below), in this volume.

12. Moshe Weinfeld, "The Prayers for Knowledge, Repentance and Forgiveness in the 'Eighteen Benedictions'—Qumran Parallels, Biblical Antecedents, and Basic Characteristics" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 48 (1979): 186–200, reprinted in Moshe Weinfeld, *Early Jewish Liturgy: From*

sounded only in passing; the prayer does not settle there, either thematically or rhetorically. Indeed, what Weinfeld does not note is that the three petitions for discernment, repentance, and forgiveness move directly into a generalized petition for redemption, which, in context, is their climax (a poetic epitome of the Eighteen Benedictions, for instance, phrases this as ותסלח לנו להיות גאולים, "and pardon us so that we may be redeemed"),[13] and *this* will ultimately constitute the main thematic burden of the sequence. We should note that the final petition, for the acceptance of prayer, also appeals in passing to God's compassion and mercy, and that its first sentence (in the Babylonian version) will appear in the medieval *seliḥot* ("penitential") liturgy:

שמע קולנו יי אלהינו
חוס ורחם עלינו
וקבל ברחמים וברצון את תפילתנו

Hear our voice, O Lord our God;
Have mercy and compassion upon us
and accept our prayers in compassion and favor.

Still, there is no *extended* rhetoric of self-abasement in the Amidah sequence, neither verbal nor gestural. The prayer is recited in a standing position (as in the presence of a ruler or a master), with only a slight bow at the beginning and the end, signifying respect and submission—but no prostration, actual or symbolic.[14]

All of this changes when we turn to the liturgy for fast days. In the Mishnah, fasts are proclaimed by the court in situations of dire need or crisis, particularly on account of drought.[15] The first chapter of *m. Ta'anit* lays out a finely calibrated sequence of communal responses to a delay in the arrival of the autumn rains, and the second chapter lists the liturgical order for these days:

> On the third [Rabban Gamaliel: On the seventh] of Marheshvan they pray for rain . . .
> If the seventeenth of Marheshvan has come and no rain has fallen, individuals begin to fast [and observe] three days of fasting . . .
> If the first of Kislev has come and no rain has fallen, the court enjoins on the community three days of fasting . . .

Psalms to the Prayers in Qumran and Rabbinic Literature [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2004), 179–93. Esther G. Chazon has also stressed the importance of this thematic cluster in the daily petitions of *The Words of the Luminaries* at Qumran, in Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God*, 2:182–84. See also Kimelman, "Penitential Part of the Amidah" (pp. 79, 82 below).

13. See *b. Ber.* 29a, and carried over from there into all prayer books.

14. These points are developed by Uri Ehrlich, *The Nonverbal Language of Prayer: A New Approach to Jewish Liturgy* (trans. Dena Ordan; TSAJ 105; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 29–63.

15. Cf., in the early Israelite context, the prescribed response to a plague of locusts in Joel 1:1–2:17.

If these days passed and their prayers had not been answered, the court enjoins on the community three more days of fasting . . .

If these days passed and their prayers still had not been answered, the court enjoins on the community seven more days of fasting . . . and they blow the *shofar* . . .

If these days passed and their prayers still had not been answered, they must behave . . . like men who suffer God's displeasure (כבני אדם הנזופין למקום) . . .

[Ch. 2:]

How did they order the matter on the [last seven] days of fasting?

They would bring out the Torah-shrine into the open space in the town and put wood-ashes on the Torah-shrine and on the heads of the officials of the court; and everyone would take ashes and put them on their heads.

The eldest among them uttered before them words of admonition:

Brethren, it is not written of the men of Nineveh that "God saw their sackcloth and their fasting," but that *God saw their deeds, that they turned from their evil ways* (Jonah 3:10), and in the Prophets it is said. *Rend your heart and not your garments* (Joel 2:13).

They stood up in prayer and sent down before the Torah-shrine an elder, well versed in prayer, one who had children and whose house was barren of food, so that he might be whole-hearted in his prayer. He recited before them twenty-four benedictions: the daily Eighteen and an additional six.

And these are: The verses [invoking divine] remembrance [i.e., providential attention] and [mentioning the blowing of] *shofarot* [to call down divine attention], and *In my distress I called to the Lord and He answered me* (Ps 120), and *I turn my eyes to the mountains; from where will my help come?* (Ps 121), and *Out of the depths I call You, O Lord* (Ps 130), and *A prayer of the afflicted when he is faint* (Ps 102). And he concludes each of them with its proper ending:

After the first he says, "May He Who answered Abraham our father on Mount Moriah answer you and hearken to the sound of your crying this day. Praised be You, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel!"

After the second he says, "May He Who answered our fathers at the Red Sea . . . Praised . . . Who is mindful of things forgotten!"

After the third he says, "May He Who answered Joshua in Gilgal . . . Praised . . . Who hearkens to the blowing of the *shofar*!"

After the fourth he says, "May He Who answered Samuel at Mitspah . . .

Praised . . . Who hearkens to those who cry out!"

After the fifth he says, "May He Who answered Elijah on Carmel . . . Praised . . . Who hearkens to prayer!"

After the sixth he says, "May He Who answered David and his son Solomon in Jerusalem . . . Praised . . . Who has compassion for the land!"[16]

16. For the subsequent use of this text as a model for later penitential liturgical poetry, see Laura Lieber, "Confessing from A to Z: Penitential Forms in Early Synagogue Poetry," below in this volume, p. 107.

Both the verbal and the nonverbal rhetoric are ratcheted up step by step until they arrive at the climax, when the Torah-shrine (the symbol of God's presence) is exposed and, as it were, debased or endangered by being taken out of the synagogue into the public square and covered with wood ash, as are the heads of the participants in the rite.[17] This is the point at which God is invoked most urgently and desperately.

I am inclined to view this calibrated response to the delay of rainfall in *m. Ta'anit* as emblematic of the early rabbinic approach to public liturgical rhetoric in general; it is very context- and occasion-specific, graduated, finely calibrated. If the rhetoric of the mandated daily communal petitionary prayer—itself a rabbinic novelty—were to begin at *fortissimo*, what stops would be left to pull out in order to dramatize the heightened intensity of an actual emergency? Instead, the rabbinic ritual aesthetic generally holds back the "big guns," that is, the extreme penitential rhetoric, for times of acute crisis. This is not necessarily inconsistent with the evidence from the Second Commonwealth period. Those penitential prayers all reflect an acute sense of crisis that is *specifically* contextualized in their narrative frames. These pieces are represented either as occasional prayers of intercession (e.g., Ezra 9:1–5; Neh 1:1–4; 9:1–5; Dan 9:1–3; Jdt 9:1; Bar 1:1–15) or as private prayers of individuals (Manasseh in Pr Man, Daniel in Dan 6:11–12). The only exception, Qumran, is an elitist, pietist-penitential community that sees the world as being in a state of *perpetual* crisis, to which daily communal penitential prayer that effects atonement for all Israel is deemed to be the appropriate and necessary response.[18] The rabbis, in introducing a daily petitionary sequence that should ideally be recited by all Jews, not just fellow rabbis, choose not to sustain the penitential intensity throughout on a thrice-daily basis, but to calibrate the rhetorical effect relative to the occasion and the circumstances.[19]

Thus, in *m. Ta'an.* 2:1, the specific crisis of an ongoing drought is to be dramatized before God through fasting, covering oneself and the Torah-shrine with ashes, sounding the alarum on the *shofar*, and crying out loud—all of this in full view in the public square. The people are exhorted to repentance; they acknowledge their sins (as good Deuteronomists, they interpret the lack of rainfall as reflecting God's judgment upon them—they see themselves as spurned and rebuked by God; כבני אדם הנזופין למקום); and they appeal for God's intervention. The additional texts recited, beyond the regular Eighteen Benedictions, are all scriptural, mostly psalms of complaint. The appended prayers all invoke specific instances of God's saving actions in the past; they thereby provide precedent and motivation for a repeat performance in the present. The actual prayer formulas

17. See the series of post-facto explanations of these customs at *y. Ta'an.* 2:1.

18. See the remarks of Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), esp. 109–59, 194–95.

19. See Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, 193–217, and esp. 243–50.

recorded in the Mishnah are *not*, strictly speaking, penitential; there is no shamefaced verbal self-abasement before God, no plea for mercy, and no confession.[20]

Noteworthy here, though, is the elder's homily of admonition contrasting the inner act of repentance, which is to be externalized in a change of personal behavior, with the ritual actions of fasting and covering oneself in sackcloth and ashes, acts of mourning and self-mortification designed to get God's attention and provoke a divine response. For the rite to be fully efficacious, the act of repentance must *precede* it (as David Lambert has noted).[21] A similar note is sounded in a tradition that appears in the corresponding passages of the Tosefta (*t. Ta'an.* 1:8) and the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Ta'an.* 16a), which *do* refer in passing to the act of confession.[22] One who confesses his sin (the public, ritual activity) but does not repent (the inner activity to be made manifest in a change in behavior) is compared to a person holding a dead reptile in his hand who immerses himself in a *miqveh*. The act of purification is not effective until he rids himself of the source of impurity. So public confession, too, is deemed ineffective without prior personal change. The tension here between the mechanical efficacy of ritual and the personal, internal work of changing one's habitus is palpable. (There are, of course, scriptural antecedents in the prophetic critique of ritual efficacy: cf. Lev 16 vs. Isa 58, *both* read in the synagogue on the Day of Atonement.[23])

As we have noted, confession does not figure explicitly in the mishnaic account of occasional fast days, but it is referred to in passing, though not by name, in the corresponding toseftan tradition: "Better that a person should be shamed before his neighbor [i.e., by confessing his misdeed to that neighbor] than that he and his children should become bloated from famine" (*t. Ta'an.* 1:8). Additionally, a famously efficacious prayer formula for rainmaking on fast days, attributed in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Ta'an.* 25b) to Rabbi Akiva, is formally a confession. Ms. Munich 95 gives this formula as:

אבינו מלכנו חטאנו לפניך
[א"מ] אין לנו מלך אלא אתה
אבינו מלכנו [למענך] רחם עלינו

20. See again Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, 243–50.

21. See n. 5 above.

22. Strictly speaking, the act of public confession is explicitly mentioned only in the talmudic version of the tradition: "One who has sinned and confesses his sin but has not repented—to what may he be compared? To a man holding a dead reptile in his hand. . . ." The toseftan version begins, "If one was holding a dead reptile in his hand . . ." without the explicit comparison. Confession is mentioned in the scriptural text (Prov 28:13) that is cited for support in both versions: *Whoever confesses and forsakes [his transgressions] will find mercy.*

23. The Torah reading of Lev 16 is mandated already in the Mishnah, *Meg.* 3:5 (cf. *t. Meg.* 3[4]:7). The Haftarah reading beginning at Isa 57:15 appears for the first time in *b. Meg.* 31a. It is not clear whether the (Babylonian) talmudic reading extended as far as the medieval and contemporary reading, Isa 58:14, since only the incipit is listed.

Our Father, our King—we have sinned against You!
[Our Father, our King—]we have no king but You!
Our Father, our King—[for Your own sake] have compassion for us![24]

The vaunted efficacy of this formula, which subsequently would form the basis for an extended litany recited on all fast days, the New Year, the Day of Atonement, and the ten days between them,[25] presumably lies in its invocation of God as Father and King, that is, in its reminding God of his intimate relationship to the Jewish people, who swear fealty to him alone. Invoking this intimate relationship, with its entailed sense of divine responsibility, effectively demands that God behave in a manner appropriate to the nature of that relationship. The rhetoric, then, is one of compulsion. (Let us never underestimate the power of the weak, which is so very much a part of the penitential idiom!) Parenthetically, the appearance of the epithets אבינו and מלכנו, in poetic juxtaposition with each other, in the Babylonian formulations of those very benedictions of the Amidah that have been identified by Weinberg as having a penitential background may be an intentional echo of the "Akivan" formula, serving the same rhetorical purpose.[26]

The occasion on which confession does figure in a major way in early rabbinic communal ritual is, of course, the Day of Atonement, and the reason is the explicit biblical mandate of Lev 16:21, where the high priest confesses all the sins of the people and transfers them to the Azazel-goat. *M. Yoma* 3:8, 4:2, and 6:2 depict a threefold confession recited by the high priest on behalf of himself and his household, on behalf of the priesthood, and on behalf of the entire people

24. The bracketed words appear in the Vilna edition of the text, but not in Ms. Munich 95; conversely, the first line (the confession) does not appear in the Vilna edition.

25. See Philip Birnbaum, ed., *Hasiddur Hashalem: Daily Prayer Book* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1949), 97–102; and cf. the shorter version that is recited daily in the Spanish-Portuguese Sefardic rite, David de Sola Pool, ed., *Book of Prayer according to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (New York: Union of Sephardic Congregations, 1941), 80.

26. The texts that follow the Babylonian tradition read:

השיבנו **אבינו** לתורתך
וקרבנו **מלכנו** לעבודתך
והחזירנו בתשובה שלמה לפניך . . .

Turn us, *our Father*, to Your Torah,
Draw us close, *our King*, to Your service,
And cause us to return in complete repentance to You . . .

סלח לנו **אבינו** כי חטאנו
מחל לנו **מלכנו** כי פשענו
כי מוחל וסולח אתה . . .

Forgive us, *our Father*, for we have sinned.
Pardon us, *our King*, for we have transgressed,
For You are pardoning and forgiving [i.e., it is Your nature to pardon and forgive] . . .

that makes use of the operative vocabulary of Lev 16:21—עון, פשע, חטאת—which in turn becomes the stereotype penitential vocabulary of rabbinic confession: חטאנו, עוינו, פשענו. An elaborate recollection of the Temple rites, including the threefold priestly confession, becomes the centerpiece of the rabbinic *musaf* (additional) service on the Day of Atonement at least as early as the Byzantine period.[27] But with the Temple ritual no longer possible, the rabbis rule that public penitential confession is to be made by each individual (possibly, as Maimonides will later assert, on the basis of Num 5:7).[28] Again, this ruling does not appear in the Mishnah, but it is explicitly articulated in the Tosefta (*t. Kippurim* 4:14–15) and elaborated in the two Talmuds.[29] Interestingly, in light of the scholarly debate about fluidity in the wording of rabbinic prayers, there is no uniform confessional formula; instead different, relatively brief formulas are cited in the two Talmuds, each attributed to a different sage.[30] (In the Babylonian Talmud, only the incipits are given, with one exception: a confession that also figures as a personal prayer recited by a different sage after the Tefillah on weekdays; see on this below. Most of the abbreviated talmudic formulas are filled out in prayer texts from the early Islamic period.) What these formulas have in common is the verbal acknowledgment of having sinned and the request for divine pardon. (Indeed, two authorities in the Babylonian Talmud maintain that the essence of the confession is simply the statement, אבל אנחנו חטאנו, "Indeed we have sinned."[31]) Noteworthy in light of the later rabbinic ruling that the confession is to be recited in the first person plural is the fact that the two formulas in texts from the Land of Israel—*y. Yoma* 8:7 and *Midr. Lev. Rab.* 3:3—are formulated in the first person singular. In the geonic liturgies from the early Islamic period, at least six of the seven confes-

27. The earliest evidence for this synagogue ritual is the poetic settings of the Temple-ritual narrative in *m. Yoma*. Some of these texts are presented and discussed for the English reader in Michael D. Swartz and Joseph Yahalom, eds., *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

28. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Sefer Hamada*ʿ, *Hilkhot Teshuvah* 1:1.

29. The toseftan text begins: "Confession is obligatory on the eve of the Day of Atonement at sunset, but the Sages ruled that one should make confession before he eats and drinks [i.e., before the fast begins at sunset] lest he be distracted by eating and drinking, and even if he has made confession before eating and drinking he should make confession afterward lest anything untoward have befallen at the meal, and even if he has made confession after eating and drinking he should make confession in the evening prayer . . . in the morning prayer . . . in the additional prayer . . . in the afternoon prayer . . . in the closing prayer, lest anything untoward have befallen him throughout the day . . ." This tradition is cited and commented upon at *y. Yoma* 8:6 and *b. Yoma* 87b.

30. See Appendix 2.

31. "Mar Zutra said: All that [i.e., the previous lengthy expressions of confession cited in the names of other rabbis] is necessary only when one did not say, 'Indeed we have sinned' [אבל אנחנו חטאנו], but if he had said, 'Indeed we have sinned,' no more is necessary, for Bar Hamdudi said: Once I stood before Samuel, who was sitting, and when the prayer leader came up and said, 'Indeed we have sinned,' he arose. Hence he inferred from this incident that this [sentence] was the essence of the confession" (*b. Yoma* 87b).

sional formulations that appear in the Babylonian Talmud attributed to different sages are incorporated into longer confessional sequences.[32] These list in detail all the types of sins being confessed. The new elements in the geonic liturgies are an extensive prose litany in which each line begins על חטא שחטאנו לפניך, "For the sins which we have sinned against You through A, through B, through C . . ." (a lengthy alphabetical acrostic that comes to be called the Long Confession/*viddui*), and a briefer alphabetical acrostic, אשמנו בגדנו גזלנו, "We have sinned, we have acted treacherously, we have stolen . . ." (that comes to be called the Short Confession/*viddui*; the rhetorical model is Dan 9:5).[33]

The longer, geonic texts additionally include motivating clauses that appeal to God's nature as merciful, forgiving, and compassionate—"Do this for your own sake if not for ours" (עשה למענך אם לא למעננו). In other words, "Be Yourself (or that part of Yourself to which we are appealing)!" These latter clauses draw on the so-called character credo of Exod 34:6–7, which is echoed throughout the late biblical penitential prayers and which the rabbis refer to as the "Thirteen Attributes" of God.[34] The invocation of these attributes forms a major component of the early medieval *seliḥot* liturgies recited during the ten days between the New Year and the Day of Atonement (which later are also extended backwards to

32. Items 1, 6, and 7 in Appendix 2 are filled out in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, ed. Goldschmidt, 160–61 (item 7 additionally appears on 163, 167), bearing in mind the standard cautionary proviso that the prayer texts as we have them may derive from later copyists rather than from the original document; items 1 and 7 appear in *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* (see n. 39 below for discussion and bibliographical details about this document), 259, 261. *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon*, 262, also gives a confessional formula beginning with the words מה נאמר לפניך יושב מרום, which includes item 5 and is an early variant of what appears in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, ed. Goldschmidt, 6 (ed. Hedegård, 22) and in the medieval rites as the continuation of item 4: cf. Birnbaum, *Hasiddur Hashalem*, 23–24; and David de Sola Pool, *Book of Prayer,* 8. The text in this form is recited daily in the preliminary morning prayers rather than on the Day of Atonement. Item 2 is filled out in a Genizah fragment (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Klau Library Ms. 403) published by Israel Abrahams, "The Lost 'Confession' of Samuel," *HUCA* 1 (1924): 377–85. The relevant text, with translation, appears on 380–81. It is difficult to evaluate item 3, since the Talmud text does not cite the scriptural verse that is introduced; this could be any of several verses that routinely appear in the penitential liturgy for the Day of Atonement. See Appendix 2 for further discussion.

33. *Seder Rav Amram*, ed. Goldschmidt, 160–61 (again, with the same cautionary proviso); *Siddur Rav Saadia*, 259–60 (a version of the Long Confession only, not in alphabetical acrostic form); and see Philip Birnbaum, ed., *Maḥzor Hashalem leRosh Hashanah veYom Kippur: High Holiday Prayer Book* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1951), 511–16, for the version in the eastern Ashkenazic (Polish) rite, and de Sola Pool, *Prayers for the Day of Atonement according to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (New York: Union of Sephardic Congregations, 1943), 57–58, for the version in the Spanish-Portuguese Sefardic rite. For subsequent extended poetic versions of the Short Confession, see Lieber, "Confessing from A to Z."

34. See *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 6:1 (ed. Mandelbaum 1:109); *Midr. Num. Rab.* 26:16; *Pesiq. Rab.* 16:1 (ed. Friedmann, 79b–80a).

periods of various durations within the immediately previous month of Elul).[35] The rabbis understand Exod 34:6–7 as God's revelation to Moses of an efficacious mitigating formula that can be invoked in the future by the Israelites whenever they fall into sin. God, as it were, demonstrates to Moses what the prayer leader should say in these circumstances.[36] The formula, again, effectively pushes God to activate those forbearing attributes of his that are being invoked, that is, to act on behalf of his people in order to be consistent with his own well-established character.

These, then, are the specific penitential elements for fast days and the Day of Atonement that are articulated in the classical rabbinic literature, and elaborated and extended in the medieval liturgies: self-abasement through fasting and intense verbal rhetoric, confession of sins, and requests for forgiveness that appeal to God's gracious compassion.

There is yet a second area of rabbinic prayer in which penitential rhetoric is widely employed, namely, personal petitions (which often are uttered in public spaces). The rabbinic Tefillah is conceived of as a communal prayer to be recited on behalf of corporate Israel, even when it is being recited by individuals in a private space; it is always recited in the first person plural. But the rabbis also leave room at the end of this corporate prayer for individualized, personal petitions, likely in deference to a much older custom and possibly reflecting a pre-70 practice of reciting personal petitions at the time of the offering of the daily Temple sacrifices.[37] A tradition in *t. Berakhot* (3:6; cited also at *b. ʿAbod. Zar.* 8a) holds that "one may utter words [of personal supplication] after reciting the Tefillah, even if these be as long as the order of the confession on the Day of Atonement." (This incidentally indicates that the confession on the Day of Atonement early on was generally thought to be long, even if those examples given in the talmudic

35. See Philip Birnbaum, ed., *Seliḥoth* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1952), 16–17, 22–25, et passim; and idem, *High Holiday Prayer Book*, 527–30, 987–90. The appeal to God's Thirteen Attributes is recited daily in the *teḥinot* (supplications) rubric of the Spanish-Portuguese Sefardic rite; see de Sola Pool, *Book of Prayer*, 70, 72, 74.

36. "*And the Lord passed by him and proclaimed* . . . (Exod 34:6). R. Yohanan said: Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing: this verse teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, drew His robe around Himself like a prayer leader and showed Moses the order of prayer. He said to him, Whenever Israel sin, let them carry out this service before Me and I will forgive them" (*b. Roš Haš.* 17b). Cf. also *S. Eli. Zut.* 23 (=*Pirqe R. El.* 5): "*The Lord will answer you in the day of trouble* (Ps 20:2). David, knowing that because of Israel's iniquities the Temple would be destroyed and the sacrifices would cease, was distressed for Israel and said: When troubles befall Israel who will atone for them? The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: David, do not be distressed, for I already have revealed to Moses the order of prayers for forgiveness [or, "penitential prayer"], saying to him, When troubles befall Israel, let them stand before Me as a single band and recite before Me the prayers for forgiveness and I will answer them. . . ." The text continues with an extended paraphrase of the *b. Roš Haš.* 17b tradition.

37. See, for example, Jdt 9:1 and, perhaps, Dan 6:10.

literature are not. It is not at all clear whether this text additionally posits some thematic or rhetorical affinity between these personal petitions and the confession.) Both Talmuds give examples of personal petitions recited by individual rabbis; six such prayers appear in the Palestinian Talmud (*y. Ber.* 4:2) and thirteen in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Ber.* 16b–17a). Two of the Palestinian prayers contain penitential elements; four of the thirteen Babylonian prayers are penitential (one of these is identified as having been recited on a fast day and another doubles as the confession of a different rabbi on the Day of Atonement, appearing again in that context at *b. Yoma* 87b; it is noteworthy that already here a confession for the Day of Atonement and a daily private prayer can be identical).[38]

The talmudic traditions presuppose that everyone was allowed to recite their own petitions at this point in their own words. The early geonic liturgical manuals of Amram and Saadia [39] (dating from the ninth and tenth centuries, respectively), however, provide the words for people to recite.[40] While each manual offers different texts (and Amram offers several alternatives), all of the texts are heavily penitential in their tone and rhetoric. All include a confession of sins and appeals to God's compassion. Indeed, some of the extended confessional formulas recited on the Day of Atonement and/or fast days appear here as well. Amram includes a short form of the *'avinu malkenu* litany and several of the Babylonian talmudic penitential prayers. Saadia draws on some of the phrases that are associated with the acrostic confession, *'ašamnu*, and are modeled on Dan 9:11. [41] It is noteworthy that the language of confession in both Amram and Saadia moves back and forth between the first person plural and singular. The person praying represents

38. See Appendix 3.

39. On Saadia's Siddur, see Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 186–89. The work (in Judeo-Arabic), lost for many centuries, was rediscovered in fragmentary form in the manuscripts of the Cairo Genizah and published in 1941 in an edition by Israel Davidson, Simcha Assaf, and B. Issachar Joel, *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1941). Subsequently identified fragments have been published by Alexander Scheiber, "Ketav yad ḥadash misofo shel *Siddur RaSaG*," *Sinai* 41 (1947): 59–60; Naftali Wieder, "Fourteen New Genizah Fragments of Saadya's *Siddur* Together with a Reproduction of a Missing Part," in *Saadya Studies* (ed. Erwin I. J. Rosenthal; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1943), 245–61 [the list of variant readings from this article is reprinted in Naftali Wieder, *The Formation of Jewish Liturgy in the East and the West: A Collection of Essays* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1998), 2:648–58]; idem, "Hashelamot vetiqunim le*Seder Rav Sa'adiah Ga'on*," in *Sefer Assaf* [Festschrift for Simcha Assaf; Hebrew] (ed. Umberto Cassuto, Yehoshua Guttman, and Josef Klausner; Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1953), 237–60 (reprinted, with corrections, in Wieder, *Formation of Jewish Liturgy*, 2:622–47) ; "'Ibbudei *Siddur RaSaG* vehat'amato leshimush no'aḥ: 'Ofiyo umagamto shel hasiddur," in Wieder, *Formation of Jewish Liturgy*, 2:561–621; Joseph Heinemann, "Qeṭa'im mi*Siddur RaSaG* sheṭerem zuhu" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 34 (1965): 363–65; Moshe Zucker, "Qeṭa' miKitab wajub al-tsalawat lerabbenu Sa'adiah" [Hebrew], *PAAJR* 43 (1976): 29–36; Shraga Abramson, "Letoldot hasiddur" [Hebrew], *Sinai* 81 (1977): 181–227.

40. *Seder Rav Amram*, ed. Goldschmidt, 28, 37–38, 55–58; ed. Hedegård, 104–6, 127–32, 172–80; *Siddur Rav Saadia*, 24–25 (26, 28, 39).

41. Saadia's text for *nefilat 'apayyim* is given in Appendix 4.

himself in both his individual and social capacity. All of this goes far beyond what could be imagined from the sparse directives in the two Talmuds.[42]

But the penitential rhetoric here is not limited to words. Both Amram and Saadia indicate that at this point in the service, after the conclusion of the Tefillah, all the worshipers prostrate themselves (literally, "fall on their faces," נופלים על פניהם). A tradition in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Meg.* 22b) is familiar with this custom, but may indicate some ambivalence about it, since it depicts the people as prostrating themselves in prayer on a fast day, while the visiting rabbinic master Rav declines to do so. But another Babylonian tradition (*b. B. Meṣi'a* 59b) depicts Rabbi Eliezer prostrating himself fully in personal prayer. Saadia indicates that the requisite posture is not a full prostration; rather, "one puts his left leg on the ground as he would do if he were about to sit down and folds his right leg over it as if he were about to kneel so that he is half-kneeling and half-sitting."[43] Still later, in medieval Christian Europe, this posture would be attenuated further: the worshiper places his arm across the chair in front of him and rests his head on his arm. In any case, this is as close as any worshiper gets to a full prostration in a rabbinic prayer service, so the posture is particularly important.[44] It certainly recalls the posture associated with private penitential prayer in many of the Second Commonwealth texts (particularly Daniel) and also recalls the prostrations in the Temple as the sacrifices were being offered—in that context, too, it likely was associated with the recitation of personal petitions. For all of these reasons, it appears that *this* activity of personal penitential prayer is what is continuous with some of the more commonly attested prayer practices before 70 C.E. The medieval literature refers to these prayers, and this section of the service, as *taḥanun* or *taḥanunim*, "pleading" (the term appears several times in Dan 9) as well as *nefilat*

42. See also Solomon B. Freehof, "The Origins of the Taḥanun," in *HUCA* 2 (1925): 339–50, and Ruth Langer, "'We Do Not Even Know What to Do': A Foray into the Early History of Taḥanun," 39–69 in this volume.

43. *Siddur Rav Saadia*, 24.

44. The prayer leader, on the other hand, performs a full prostration once a year, on Yom Kippur during the service that memorializes the Temple rites of atonement (*Seder Ha'avodah*), during the recitation of each of the three high priestly confessions when the Tetragrammaton would have been pronounced in the Temple and the entire assembly would have prostrated themselves. (The liturgical narrative follows the contours of *m. Yoma* 3–6.) It is customary today, in most traditional synagogues, for all (male) worshipers also to prostrate themselves fully at these points as well as during the recitation of the sentence, "We bow, prostrate ourselves, and give reverence before the Supreme King over all kings, the Holy One, blessed be He!" in the *'alenu* prayer during the additional service on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. On the significance of the posture of prostration and its attenuation in the rabbinic *nefilat 'apayyim*, see Ehrlich, *Nonverbal Language of Prayer*, 29–63, as well as the remarks of Kurt Hruby, "Quelques notes sur le Taḥanun et la place de la prière individuelle dans la liturgie synagogale," in *Littera Judaica: In Memoriam Edwin Guggenheim* (ed. Paul Jacob and Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich; Frankfurt a.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1964), 80–84, and 98 and n. 76 there (my colleague Prof. Ruth Langer, Boston College, called my attention to this article).

'apayyim, "falling on one's face." Following geonic custom, these supplications in the medieval rites follow the communal Tefillah in both the morning and afternoon services, but not at night when the service is shortened to let people get home safely for their evening meal.[45]

On Mondays and Thursdays, days on which the Torah was read in the morning service and some Jews would fast, Amram (though not Saadia) gives an even more extensive set of penitential prayers to be recited, drawing even more heavily on the Yom Kippur liturgy, including the appeal to the Thirteen Attributes; the *'ašamnu* confession, together with its introduction; and extended poetic *seliḥot*. The medieval rites will follow Amram's precedent in this regard and will further continue the process of expansion. The particular texts recited differ from rite to rite and differ in many cases from the texts given by Amram and Saadia, but the themes and rhetoric remain constant: the individual is always confessing his sins, declaring his unworthiness, throwing himself on God's mercy, and invoking divine compassion.[46] In the late medieval Polish rite (eastern Ashkenaz), for example, the text is a mosaic or cento of thematically appropriate biblical verses, drawn from all over Scripture, interwoven with rabbinic petitions and confessions.[47]

Additionally, in Amram and Saadia, both afternoon and evening services begin with a penitential verse, Ps 78:38, that invokes divine mercy: *"And He, being compassionate, forgives iniquity and does not destroy; frequently He turns His anger away and does not stir up his wrath."* In the Babylonian-type texts from the Cairo Genizah, this verse also appears at the head of the statutory morning service (before the *qaddish* that precedes *barekhu*).[48] This verse runs like a red thread through the medieval liturgies. The eleventh-century Franco-German

45. Ezra Fleischer has shown that it was customary to recite supplications also after the evening Tefillah at the end of the Sabbath in the rite of the land of Israel as that rite is attested in the texts of the Cairo Genizah. See Fleischer, "Lesidrei hatefillah bevet hakenesset shel benei 'erets yisra'el beFostat bereshit hame'ah hashelosh-'esreh" [Hebrew], *Asufot* 7 (1993): 220 n. 18.

46. *Taḥanun* texts appear in Cairo Genizah fragments following the Tefillah, and, in the morning service in text-types following the rite of the Land of Israel, comparable materials precede the morning psalms; some of this material has been published by various scholars. See, for example, the materials published and described by Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service," *HUCA* 2 (1925): 281, 293–94, 298–99, 308, 318, 324. Simcha Assaf ("From the Order of Prayer in the Land of Israel," in *Sefer Dinaburg* [ed. Yitzhak Baer et al.; Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1949], 123), publishes a text with a similar opening that precedes the morning psalms. A very brief confessional formula appears after the Tefillah in the fragment published by Solomon Schechter, "Genizah Specimens," *JQR* o.s. 10 (1898): 657. Additional, and different, texts have been published by Ezra Fleischer, "Qeṭa'im meqovtsei tefillah 'erets yisra'eliyim min hagenizah," *Kobez al yad* 13/23 (1996): 150, 183–88 (and see his discussions on 117–18, 136–39). Some of these texts are reproduced in Appendix 5.

47. See Birnbaum, *Hasiddur Hashalem*, 103–18. For the *taḥanun* rubric in the Spanish-Portuguese rite, see de Sola Pool, *Book of Prayer*, 70–81.

48. See Assaf, "From the Order of Prayer," 119–20; and Mann, "Genizah Fragments," 273.

Maḥzor Vitry[49] examines the view that the recitation of this verse at the beginning of the evening service serves a specific atoning function: since the evening service does not correspond to a daily sacrificial offering in the Temple, it could not by itself serve such a function, and the recitation of Ps 78:38 thereby becomes necessary.[50] *Vitry* also observes that this verse contains thirteen words, and notes the popular custom of reciting it three times (for a total of thirty-nine words) to accompany thirty-nine penitential self-flagellations both on Yom Kippur and, by sinners, before the daily evening service.[51] The sixteenth-century Spanish kabbalist Meir ibn Gabbai, in his liturgical work *Tola'at Ya'akov*, draws a connection between the thirteen words in this verse and the Thirteen Attributes of God in Exod 34.[52] Many of the manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah additionally include brief confessions and penitential formulas in the morning service at the conclusion of the preparatory psalms that precede the service proper.

Over time, penitential rhetoric proliferates in those parts of the service that both precede and follow the major rubrics of the recitation of the Shema (קריאת שמע) and the Tefillah/Amidah.[53] Much of this proliferation derives from the ritual innovations of various pietistic and mystical movements in the medieval Jewish world, most notably that group known as *ḥasidê 'aškenaz*, the Rhineland Pietists of the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, and the group of kabbalists who formed around Rabbi Isaac Luria in Safed in the sixteenth century.[54] Both of these groups were intensely ascetic and penitential, prescribing acts of

49. This liturgical manual was compiled by Simcha b. Samuel of Vitry, a student of Rashi, in the late eleventh century. It became one of the basic sources of *minhag 'ashkenaz*, the rite of Jews in Germany and central Europe generally (later also eastern Europe). The standard edition, which transcribes Ms. London 655, is by Shimon Hurvitz (1889; rev. 1923; reprint, Jerusalem: Alef, 1963). A more recent edition, by Arieh Goldschmidt (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Makhon Otsar Hapesukim, 2004), makes use of all the available manuscript materials and is more reliable in its presentation of the text, since Ms. London 655 is heavily interpolated.

50. On the atoning function of reciting Ps 78:38, see *Maḥzor Vitry*, section 101 (ed. Hurvitz, 77, and the variants and notes in ed. Goldschmidt, 1:148–49).

51. *Maḥzor Vitry*, sections 101 (as above) and 344 (ed. Hurvitz, 375).

52. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Tola'at Ya'akov*, Part 2 (*Sitrê tefillot šabbat umo'adim veṭa'amam*), s.v. *Uviyemot haḥol . . . veha'emet . . .* (ed. Jerusalem: Shevilei Orḥot Haḥayyim, 1995, 766–77). Ibn Gabbai holds that the recitation of this verse at the beginning of the evening service saves the souls of the departed from the judgment and punishment that take place every evening.

53. In the old rite of pre-expulsion England, for example, individuals recited a full confession every morning as part of the *'elohay nešamah* benediction, which gives thanks for the return of the soul to the body upon waking each morning. The text was published by David Kaufmann, "The Prayer-Book according to the Ritual of England before 1290," *JQR* o.s. 4 (1892): 33–34 (and see the discussion on 26–27, though it is not at all clear that this fuller version of the text was "the earlier version" not preserved elsewhere, rather than a local expansion). See also Jacob b. Jehudah Hazan of London, *Eits Ḥayyim* (ed. Israel Brodie; 3 vols.; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1962–67). I am grateful to Rabbi Edward Feld, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Prof. Stefan Reif, Cambridge University, for calling these texts to my attention.

54. See Lawrence Fine, "Penitential Practices in a Kabbalistic Mode," 127–48.

expiatory penance for confessed misdeeds or evil thoughts. Both saw prayer as a theurgic and cosmic activity: performed correctly and with proper intention, prayer could indeed move heaven and earth. Additionally, it tangibly connected the worshiper to the divine realm. For both groups, confession was a requisite step in the penitential process of atonement. Ivan Marcus, in his study of the Rhineland Pietists, notes that the penitential manuals written by Eleazar b. Judah of Worms spare the penitent the embarrassment of having to confess his sins to a sage; instead, he is to confess privately during his thrice-daily prayer.[55] The Lurianic kabbalists, who were immensely creative in the areas of ritual and liturgy, developed numerous new penitential rituals and observances, such as midnight and dawn vigils (*tiqqunê ḥaṣot* and *maʿamadot*). They observed the festivals of Pesach and Sukkot as penitential occasions and the Monday and Thursday after them as fast days with penitential liturgy; they introduced the recitation of the Thirteen Attributes before the open ark on all three festivals and observed the day before each New Moon as a fast day with penitential liturgy (*yom kippur qaṭan* or *mišmeret haḥodeš*). They also introduced a daily recitation of the Short Confession (*ʾašamnu*) and the Thirteen Attributes at the beginning of the morning supplications (*taḥanun*). In addition to effecting atonement for the worshiper, these rituals were also understood as acts of cosmic and divine *tiqqun* (repair) that hasten the coming of Israel's redemption. Lawrence Fine's study of the Lurianic circle details much of this,[56] but there still is room for more intensive research on the relationship between Lurianic religious ideology and their specific penitential rituals and liturgies. It is also worth remarking that, from a rhetorical and textual point of view, many of these new observances simply carry over to new occasions and elaborate on the major penitential texts and practices from the Day of Atonement.[57] Stefan Reif has remarked on the confluence of cultural

55. Ivan Marcus, *Piety and Society: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany* (Études sur le judaisme medieval 10; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 124.

56. Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), esp. 220–58.

57. See, for example, the following confessional prayer designated for recitation on Mondays (there are different prayers for each day of the week) as part of a daily dawn vigil (*maʿamad*) in a Lurianic Siddur published with the commentary of Isaiah Horowitz (1565?–1630), a popularizer of Lurianic ideas:

יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהי ואלהי אבותי
שתכפר לי על כל פשעי
ותחמל לי על כל עונותי
כי רבו משובותי.
לך חטאתי ועויתי ופשעתי וצררתי [ומרדתי] קשיתי ערף
וסרתי ממצותיך וממשפטיך הטובים ולא שוה לי.
אנא יי אלהי ואלהי אבותי

factors that led to the widespread diffusion and popularization of these rituals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not the least of which was access to the printing press.[58]

קבלני בתשובה שלמה לפניך
ועשה למענך אם לא למעני
ורצה תשובתי
ונקני משגיאות ומנסתרות
ואהיה מן השבים אליך בכל לב
אשר לחטאתם לא תזכור עוד . . .
אדני שמעה
אדני סלחה
אדני הקשיבה ועשה אל תאחר
למענך אלהי
כי שמך נקרא על עירך ועל עמך.
יי שמעה בקולי
תהיינה אזניך קשבות לקול תחנוני ושמע תפלתי
כי אתה שומע תפלת כל פה.
ברוך [אתה] שומע תפלה.

May it be Your will, my God and God of my fathers,
To grant me atonement for all my sins
And pardon for all my transgressions,
For my unruliness is great.
Against You have I transgressed, sinned, been scornful, [rebelled,] and been obstinate.
I have strayed from Your worthy commandments and laws, and it has availed me nothing.
I beseech You, my God and God of my fathers:
Receive me back in perfect penitence.
Do this for Your own sake if not for mine,
And may my repentance be acceptable to You.
Clear me of errors known and unknown.
May I be counted among those wholehearted penitents whose sins You no longer recall . . .
O Lord, hearken! O Lord, forgive!
O Lord, listen and act: do not delay!
For Your own sake, O my God:
For Your name is invoked upon Your city and Your people.
O Lord, hearken to the sound of my voice,
Let Your ears be attentive to the sound of my supplications, and hear my prayer:
For You hearken to the prayer of every mouth.
Praised [be You], Who hearkens to prayer.
(*Siddur Hashelah Hashalem: Sha'ar Hashamayim* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Ahavat Shalom, 1998), 2:407.

58. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 240–55.

We should not conclude this survey without noting the radical pruning of penitential elements in the liturgy by the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Reformers in central Europe and the United States: self-abasement and confession of human sinfulness and impotence before God did not sit well with the optimistic, self-confident view of humanity prevalent before the First World War in Europe and before the Vietnam War in the United States.[59] Here once again, contextual cultural factors condition one's religious outlook and its liturgical expression.

To conclude, Reif trenchantly has observed:

> Bearing in mind that it was the fate of personal prayer of the biblical and talmudic type to become the basis for Jewish community worship in the later periods, [we] should not be surprised to find that new niches had to be found for the expression of immediate individual or local feelings in the new dominant synagogue context of the Middle Ages. Not that it was felt that private entreaty was inappropriate or likely to be ineffectual, simply that the stress on the importance of communal prayer left the distinct impression that the chances of success were better in that context.[60]

Thus, heavy penitential rhetoric, mandated by the early rabbis for statutory communal worship only on the Day of Atonement and fast days, begins to proliferate "outwards" in the medieval liturgies from the context of personal supplications. This takes place primarily, though not exclusively, under the influence of pietistic movements that, in their asceticism and intense penitentialism, recall some of the phenomenological traits of the Qumran community, that group in which we find pronounced communal penitential prayers in the period before 70 C.E.

Appendix 1

The Rabbinic Weekday Communal Prayer (Tefillah) according to the Old Rite of the Land of Israel as Attested in Manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah

The following text (an excerpt from Cambridge University Library, Taylor-Schechter Collection, K27.33) is one of many similar—though not identical—liturgical fragments of this prayer sequence found in the Cairo Genizah that bear

59. See, in general, Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1968); and Eric L. Friedland, "*Were Our Mouths Filled With Song*": *Studies in Liberal Jewish Liturgy* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997); Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer,* 256–63.

60. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 216.

verbal and stylistic identifying marks of customs of the Land of Israel (as opposed to Babylonia). It was first published by Solomon Schechter, "Genizah Specimens," *JQR* o.s. 10 (1898): 656–57.[61] Our interest here is in the penitential elements, in benedictions 5, 6, and 15, and in the *absence* of pronounced penitential rhetoric elsewhere. This daily (weekday) petitionary prayer sequence takes the rhetorical form of eighteen benedictions.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב
האל הגדול הגבור והנורא
אל עליון קונה שמים וארץ
מגיננו ומגן אבותינו
מבטחנו בכל דור ודור.
ברוך אתה יי מגן אברהם.

1. Praised be You, O Lord our God and God of our fathers—
   God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob[62]—
   Great, mighty, and awesome God,[63]
   God Most High, creator of heaven and earth,[64]
   Our shield and shield of our fathers,[65]
   Our stronghold in every generation.
   Praised be You, O Lord, Shield of Abraham.

אתה גבור משפיל גאים
חזק ומדין עריצים
חי עולמים מקים מתים
משיב הרוח ומוריד הטל
מכלכל חיים מחיה המתים
כהרף עין ישועה תצמיח.
ברוך אתה יי מחיה המתים.

2. You are mighty—humbling the haughty;
   Powerful—calling the arrogant to judgment;

61. See now Yehezkel Luger, *The Weekday Amidah in the Cairo Genizah* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Orhot, 2002), a synoptic study of sixty-nine Genizah fragments of the Tefillah/Amidah, classified according to text-types and listing full variants. See also Uri Ehrlich, "Tefillat shemoneh 'esreh shelemah 'al pi minhag 'erets yisra'el," *Kobez al yad* 18 [28] (2005): 1–22; and Ezra Fleischer, "Megillah kedumah letefillat yom ḥol keminhag 'erets yisra'el," in *Higayon leYona: New Aspects in the Study of Midrash, Aggadah and Piyut in Honor of Professor Yona Fraenkel* (ed. Joshua Levinson, Jacob Elbaum, and Galit Hazan-Rokem; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2006), 529–49.

62. Exod 3:15.

63. Deut 10:17; Neh 9:32.

64. Gen 14:19.

65. Cf. Gen 15:1.

Eternal—reviving the dead;
Causing the wind to blow and the dew to fall;
Sustaining the living, resurrecting the dead:
In the twinkling of an eye cause our salvation to sprout!
Praised be You, O Lord, Reviver of the dead.

קדוש אתה ונורא שמך
ואין אלוה מבלעדך.
ברוך אתה יי האל הקדוש.

3. You are holy and Your name is awesome,
And there is no God beside You.
Praised be You, O Lord, the Holy God.

חננו אבינו דעה מאתך
ובינה והשכל מתורתך.
ברוך אתה יי חונן הדעת.

4. Graciously favor us, our Father, with understanding from You,
And discernment and insight out of Your Torah.
Praised be You, O Lord, gracious Bestower of understanding.

השיבנו יי אליך ונשובה
חדש ימינו כקדם.
ברוך אתה יי הרוצה בתשובה.

5. ***Turn us to You, O Lord, that we may return;***
Renew our days as of old (Lam 5:21)**.**
Praised be You, O Lord, who desires repentance.

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו לך
מחה והעבר פשעינו מנגד עניך
כי רבים רחמיך.
ברוך אתה יי המרבה לסלוח.

6. **Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned against You.**
Erase and blot out our sins from before your eyes,
For You are abundantly compassionate.
Praised be You, O Lord, abundantly forgiving.[66]

ראה בעינינו וריבה ריבנו
וגאלנו למען שמך.
ברוך אתה יי גואל ישראל.

66. Cf. Isa 55:7.

7. Behold our afflictions and defend our cause,
And redeem us for Your name's sake.[67]
Praised be You, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel.

רפאנו יי אלהינו ממכאוב לבנו
ויגון ואנחה העבר ממנו
והעלה רפואה למכותינו.
ברוך אתה יי רופא חולי עמו ישראל.

8. Heal us, O Lord our God, of the pain in our hearts,
Remove grief and sighing from us,
And cause our wounds to be healed.[68]
Praised be You, O Lord, Healer of the sick of Israel Your [lit. "His"] people.

ברך עלינו יי אלהינו את השנה הזאת לטובה
בכל מיני תבואתה
וקרב מהרה שנת קץ גאלתנו
ותן טל ומטר על פני האדמה
ושבע עולם מאוצרות טובך
ותן ברכה במעשה ידינו.
ברוך אתה יי מברך השנים.

9. Bless this year for us, O Lord our God,
And may its harvest be abundant.
Hasten the time of our deliverance.
Provide dew and rain for the earth;
Satiate the world from your storehouses of goodness,
And bestow a blessing upon the work of our hands.
Praised be You, O Lord, who blesses the years.

תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו
ושא נס לקבוץ גליותינו.
ברוך אתה יי מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל.

10. Sound a blast on the great *shofar* for our freedom[69]
And raise a banner for the ingathering of our exiles.[70]
Praised be You, Gatherer of the dispersed of Your people Israel.

השיבה שופטינו כבראשונה
ויועצינו כבתחלה
ומלוך עלינו אתה לבדך.
ברוך אתה יי אוהב המשפט.

67. Cf. Ps 119:153–54; Jer 50:34.
68. Cf. Jer 30:17.
69. Cf. Isa 27:13.
70. Cf. Isa 11:12.

11. Restore our judges as of old
And our leaders as in days of yore,[71]
And rule over us—You alone.
Praised be You, O Lord, Lover of justice.

למשמדים אל-תהי תקוה
ומלכות זדון מהרה תעקר בימינו
והנוצרים והמינים כרגע יאבדו.
ימחו מספר החיים
ועם צדיקים אל יכתבו.
ברוך אתה יי מכניע זדים.

12. May there be no hope for the apostates,
And speedily uproot the kingdom of arrogance in our own day.
May the Nazarenes[72] and the sectarians perish in an instant.
May they be blotted out of the book of the living
And may they not be inscribed with the righteous (Ps 69:29).
Praised be You, O Lord, Subduer of the arrogant.

על גרי הצדק יהמו רחמיך
ותן לנו שכר טוב עם עושי רצונך.
ברוך אתה יי מבטח לצדיקים.

13. Show abundant compassion to the righteous converts
And give us a good reward together with those who do Your will.
Praised be You, Stay of the righteous.

רחם יי אלהינו ברחמיך הרבים
על ישראל עמך
ועל ירושלים עירך
ועל ציון משכן כבודך
ועל היכלך
ועל מעונך
ועל מלכות בית דוד משיח צדקך.
ברוך אתה יי אלהי דוד בונה ירושלים.

14. Have compassion, O Lord our God, in Your abundant mercy,
On Israel Your people,

71. Cf. Isa 1:26.

72. The term נוצרים in later literature refers to Christians, but here it likely refers to Judeo-Christians, since this malediction is directed against Jewish sectarians (מינים). See Reuven Kimelman, "*Birkat Ha-Minim* and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition,* vol. 2, *Aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period* (ed. E. P. Sanders et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 226–44. On the multiple (and censored) variants of this benediction, see now Uri Ehrlich and Ruth Langer, "The Earliest Texts of the *Birkat Haminim*," *HUCA* 76 (2005): 63–112.

And on Jerusalem Your city,
And on Zion the abode of Your Presence,
And on Your sanctuary,
And on Your dwelling-place,
And on the royal seed of David Your justly anointed.
Praised be You, O Lord, God of David, Rebuilder of Jerusalem.

שמע יי אלהינו בקול תפילתנו
ורחם עלינו
כי אל חנון ורחום אתה.
ברוך אתה יי שומע תפילה.

15. **Hear, O Lord our God, the sound of our prayers**
And have compassion upon us,
For You are a gracious and compassionate God.
Praised be You, O Lord, Hearer of prayer.[73]

רצה יי אלהינו ושכון בציון
ויעבדוך עבדיך בירושלים.
ברוך אתה יי שאותך ביראה נעבד.

16. Deign, O Lord our God, to dwell in Zion,
And may Your servants worship You in Jerusalem.
Praised be You, O Lord, Whom we worship in reverence.

מודים אנחנו לך
אתה הוא יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
על כל-הטובות החסד והרחמים
שגמלתנו ושעשית עמנו ועם אבותינו מלפנינו
ואם אמרנו מטה רגלנו חסדך יי יסעדנו.
ברוך אתה יי הטוב לך להודות.

17. We thank You,
Our God and God of our fathers,
For all of the goodness, the lovingkindness, and the mercies
With which You have requited us and our fathers before us.
For when we say, "Our foot slips," Your mercy, O Lord, supports us.
Praised be You, O Lord, Good One, to whom our thanks are due.

שים שלומך
על ישראל עמך
ועל עירך
ועל נחלתך
וברכנו כלנו כאחד.
ברוך אתה יי עושה השלום.

73. Ps 65:3.

18. Bestow Your peace[74]
Upon Israel Your people,
And upon Your city,
And upon Your inheritance,
And bless us all together.
Praised be You, O Lord, Maker of peace.

Appendix 2

Forms of Confession for the Day of Atonement in Talmudic Literature[75]

1. The high priest's confession in the Temple on the Day of Atonement (*m. Yoma* 6:2; cf. also *m. Yoma* 3:8 and 4:2)

אנא השם
עוו פשעו חטאו לפניך עמך בית ישראל.
אנא בשם
כפר נא לעונות ולפשעים ולחטאים
שעוו ופשעו וחטאו לפניך עמך בית ישראל
ככתוב בתורת משה עבדך לאמר
כי-ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם
לפני יי תטהרו.

Please, O Lord:[76]
Your people the household of Israel have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before You.
Please, O Lord:
Grant atonement for the iniquities, transgressions, and sins
which Your people the household of Israel have committed, transgressed, and sinned before You,
As it is written in the Torah of Moses Your servant,
For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins;
You shall be clean before the Lord (Lev 16:30).

74. Cf. Num 6:22.

75. Regarding the texts and incipits of prayers that appear in the Talmuds, we are equally dependent on the vagaries of the medieval manuscript traditions. It is not clear how much has been altered or "contemporized" in the process of transmission; this is particularly the case with the Babylonian Talmud, which was copied more frequently.

76. השם and בשם here are euphemisms for the Tetragrammaton, the proper name of God, which was uttered by the high priest in the Temple on this occasion, the people prostrating themselves on their faces at the sound of its utterance, according to the mishnaic tradition.

2. Personal confession on the Day of Atonement (*y. Yoma* 8:7; Ms. Leiden, Scaliger 3)

כיצד הוא מתודה?
ר' ברכיה בשם ר' בא בר בינה:
רבוני
חטאתי ומורע עשיתי
ובדעת רעה הייתי עומד
ובדרך רחוקה הייתי מהלך
וכשם שעשיתי איני עושה
יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהי
[שתכפר לי על כל פשעי]
שתחמול לי על כל עוונותי
ותסלח לי על כל חטאתי.

How does one confess?
R. Berekhiah in the name of R. Ba bar Binah:
My Lord,
I have sinned and done evil things,
And have remained in an evil frame of mind,
And have walked down a path that is far [from You].
And what I have done [in the past] I shall not do [again].
May it be Your will, O Lord my God,
[To grant me atonement for all my transgressions,]
To pardon me for all my iniquities,
And to forgive me for all my sins.

3. Personal confession on the Day of Atonement (*Midr. Lev. Rab.* 3:3)

אמר ר' ביבא בר אבינא:
כיצד צריך אדם להתוודות ערב יום הכיפורים?
צריך אדם לומר:
כל מה שעשיתי מודע [נוסח אחר: מודה]
בדרך רע הייתי עומד
וכל מה שעשיתי עוד איני עושה כמוהו.
יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהי
שתחמול לי על כל עוונותי
ותסלח לי על כל פשעי
ותכפר לי על כל חטאי.

Said R. Biba bar Avina:
How should a person confess on the eve of the Day of Atonement?
One should say:
Well known is [var.: I confess] all that I have done.
I have remained in an evil path,
And everything that I have done I shall not do its like again.
May it be Your will, O Lord my God,
To pardon me for all my iniquities,

And to forgive me for all my transgressions,
And to grant me atonement for all my sins.

4. Personal confessions on the Day of Atonement (*b. Yoma* 87b)
The Babylonian Talmud, with one exception, gives only the incipits of the confessions. To the extent that these formulas reappear in post-talmudic literature, the rest of the confession is filled out. It is not clear whether these fuller texts are later expansions based on the talmudic incipits or whether they represent talmudic-era formularies that simply have been abbreviated in the talmudic text. I cite the talmudic passage in full and then present the later, fuller confessions based on it.

מאי אמר?
אמר רב:
אתה יודע רזי עולם . . .
ושמואל אמר:
ממעמקי הלב . . .
ולוי אמר:
ובתורתך כתוב לאמר . . .
ר יוחנן אמר:
רבון העולמים . . .
ר יהודה אמר:
כי עונותינו רבו מלמנות
וחטאתינו עצמו מספר.
רב המנונא אמר:
אלהי
עד שלא נוצרתי איני כדאי
עכשיו שנוצרתי כאילו לא נוצרתי
עפר אני בחיי קל וחומר במיתתי
הרי אני ככלי מלא בושה וכלימה
יהי רצון מלפניך
שלא אחטא
ומה שחטאתי מרוק ברחמיך
אבל לא על ידי יסורין
והיינו וידויא דרבא כולה שתא ודרב המנונא זוטא ביומא דכפורי
אמר מר זוטרא:
לא אמרן אלא דלא אמר **אבל אנחנו חטאנו**
אבל אמר **אבל אנחנו חטאנו** תו לא צריך.

What does one say [as the confession]?
(1) Rav said:
You know the secrets of eternity . . .
(2) And Samuel said:
You know the depths of the heart . . .
(3) Levi said:
And in Your Torah it is written . . .
(4) R. Yohanan said:

Master of the universe . . .

(5) R. Judah said:
Indeed our iniquities are too many to enumerate,
our sins too numerous to count.

(6) Rav Hamnuna said:
My God,
Before I was formed I was of no worth,
And now that I have been formed, it is as if I had not been formed.
Dust am I in my lifetime, so much the more so in my death.
Behold I am like a vessel full of shame and reproach.
May it be Your will that I sin no more.
And as for the sins that I have committed—wipe them away in Your mercy,
But not through suffering.
This is the confession that Rabba recited all year long, and that Rav Hamnuna the Younger recited on the Day of Atonement.

(7) Mar Zutra said:
These were recited only if one had not [already] said,
Indeed we have sinned.
But if one had said,
Indeed we have sinned,
no more is necessary.

No. 1 appears in *Seder Rav Amram*, *Siddur Rav Saadia*, and in all the medieval rites. The text is relatively stable. I cite a Genizah fragment (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Klau Library Ms. 403) published by Abrahams, "The Lost 'Confession' of Samuel," *HUCA* 1 (1924): 380–81:

אתה יודע רזי עולם
ותעלומות סתרי כל חי
אתה חופש כל חדרי בטן
ובוחן כליות ולב
אין דבר נעלם ממך
ואין נסתר מנגד עיניך.
[יהי רצון מלפניך
יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו
שתסלח לנו על כל פשעינו
ותמחול לנו על כל עוונותינו
ותכפר לנו על כל חטאותינו.]

You know the secrets of eternity,
The most hidden mysteries of all living beings.
You search out the innermost recesses,
Examining the reins and the heart.
Nothing is concealed from You,
Nothing hidden from Your sight.
[May it be Your will,

O Lord our God and God of our fathers,
To forgive us for all our transgressions,
To pardon us for all our iniquities,
To grant us atonement for all our sins.]

No. 2 does not appear in any of the extant medieval rites, but is known from the same Genizah fragment cited above:

אתה יודע מעמקי לב
וסתרי כליות אתה מכיר
יצרי בריאות לפניך גלוים
ועשתותינו ממך לא נכחדו
נושא עון ופשע נקראתה
אתה הוא יי אלהינו
שאתה יודע שאחריתנו רימה
עוונותינו אנו מתוודים לפניך
יי אלהינו
הטה אזנך לבקשתנו
וכו'

You know the depths of the heart;
The secrets of the innermost parts You plumb.
The imaginings of all creatures are revealed before You,
Our devices are not concealed from You.
Forgiver of iniquity and transgression (Exod 32:7) You are called.
You are the Lord our God,
For You know that our end is the worm.
Our iniquities we confess before You;
O Lord our God,
Incline Your ear to our entreaty, etc.

The two confession texts cited by Rav and Samuel are both brief poems, each line having meter (four accents) but not rhyme; this style also characterizes the *teqi'ata devei rav*, poetic frames for the verses of *malkiyyot*, *zikronot*, and s*hofarot* for the New Year (referred to in *y. Roš Haš.* 1:3, *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 1:2, and *b. Roš Haš.* 27a).

No. 4 is filled out in *Seder Rav Amram* (whether originally or by a later copyist) as follows (ed. Goldschmidt, 6; cf. also the beginning of *nefilat 'apayim*, 37):

רבון כל העולמים
לא על צדקותינו אנחנו מפילים תחנוניו לפניך
כי על רחמיך הרבים.
מה אנו ומה חיינו ומה חסדנו ומה צדקנו ומה גבורתנו
מה נאמר לפניך יי אלהינו
הלא כל הגבורים כאין לפניך

ואנשי שם כלא היו
וחכמים כבלי מדע
ונבונים כבלי השכל
כי כל מעשינו תוהו ובוהו
וימי חיינו הבל לפניך
שכן כתוב בדברי קדשך
ומותר האדם מן הבהמה אין כי הכל הבל.

Master of all worlds!
Not [in reliance] on our righteousness do we cast our supplications before You,
But on Your abundant mercy.
What are we? What is our life? What is our piety? What is our righteousness? What is our strength?
What shall we say before You, O Lord our God?
Are not all mighty men as nothing before You,
And men of valor as if they had never been;
The wise as if without knowledge,
And the discerning as if without understanding?
For all of our deeds are void
And the days of our lives are nothing before You.
For thus it is written in Your holy scripture,
Man has no superiority over beast, since both amount to nothing (Eccl 3:19).

The first two lines appear additionally in the eighth-century homiletical work *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah*, ch. 19 [21], ed. Meir Friedmann, 118. The fourth line ("What are we? What is our life?") is cited by Samuel as the prayer for the *ne'ilah* ("closing") service on the Day of Atonement at *b. Yoma* 87b. Saadia (262) incorporates the material from this line through the end into a confessional formula that begins as follows, and also incorporates no. 5:

מה נאמר לפניך יושב מרום
ומה נספר לפניך שוכן שחקים
כי עונותינו רבו מלמנות
וחטאתינו עצמו מלספר
ואתה יי טוב וסלח
ורב חסד לכל קוראיך.

What shall we say before You, Who are enthroned on high?
What can we recount to You, Who dwell in the heavens?
Indeed our iniquities are too many to enumerate,
Our sins too numerous to count.
But You, O Lord, are good and forgiving
And abundantly gracious to all who call upon You.

No. 6, which is fully spelled out in the Talmud here and repeated verbatim at *b. Ber.* 16b among the private prayers of the rabbis (see Appendix 3 below), appears

in *Seder Rav Amram* (ed. Goldschmidt, 161–162) and in the medieval rites at the end of the confessional sequence on the Day of Atonement.

No. 7 becomes part of the introduction to the Short *Viddui* (*'ašamnu*) in *Seder Rav Amram* (ed. Goldschmidt, 160–61) and in the medieval rites. Saadia's *Siddur* (261) uses this in the same place, although without a full acrostic poem (see Appendix 4, below):

אבל אנחנו חטאנו עוינו פשענו ומרדנו
וסרנו ממצותיך וממשפטיך הטובים ולא שוה לנו
ואתה צדיק על כל הבא עלינו
כי אמת עשית ואנחנו הרשענו.

Indeed, we have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have transgressed, we have rebelled,
We have strayed from Your worthy commandments and laws,[77] and it has availed us nothing.
But You are just concerning all that has befallen us—
For You have behaved faithfully, while we have done wrong (Neh 9:33).

Appendix 3

Personal Prayers with Penitential Motifs in the Talmud of the Land of Israel (y. Ber. 4:2) and the Babylonian Talmud (b. Ber. 16b–17a)

From the Talmud of the Land of Israel (Ms. Leiden Scaliger 3):

דבית רבי ינאי אמרין:
הנוער משנתו צריך לומ'
בא'י מחיה המתים.
רבוני חטאתי לך . . .

1. Those of the school of Yannai would say:
One who wakes from his sleep [in the morning] must say:
Praised are You, O Lord, who revives the dead.
My Lord, I have sinned against You . . .

According to this tradition, immediately after praising God for being restored to life upon awakening, and before praying for protection, guidance, and sustenance during the new day ahead, one must begin one's day by reciting a confes-

77. Cf. Dan 9:5.

sion. (This text is cited as an option for recitation in the morning *taḥanun* section in *Seder Rav Amram*, ed. Goldschmidt, 37.)

ר' חייא בר ווא מצלי:
יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו ואלהי אבתינו
שתתן בליבינו לעשות תשובה שלמה לפניך
שלא נבוש מאבותינו לעולם הבא.

2. R. Hiyya bar Vava would pray:
   May it be Your will, O Lord our God and God of our fathers,
   To give us the capacity (lit., "to put it in our hearts") to turn to You in perfect repentance,
   So that we not be put to shame in the presence of our fathers in the world to come.

From the Babylonian Talmud:

רבי יוחנן בתר דמסיים צלותיה אמר הכי:
יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו
שתציץ בבשתנו ותביט ברעתנו
ותתלבש ברחמיך ותתכסה בעזך
ותתעטף בחסידותך ותתאזר בחנינותך
ותבוא לפניך מידת טובך וענונותך.

1. Rabbi Yohanan, after finishing his Tefillah, would say thus:
   May it be Your will, O Lord our God,
   To glance at our shame and see our distress,
   And clothe Yourself in Your compassion and cover Yourself in Your might,
   And wrap Yourself in Your lovingkindness and array Yourself in Your graciousness,
   And may Your quality of goodness and patience come before You.

רבי זירא בתר דמסיים צלותיה אמר הכי:
יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו
שלא נחטא ולא נבוש ולא נכלם מאבותינו.

2. Rabbi Zera, after finishing his Tefillah, would say thus:
   May it be Your will, O Lord our God,
   That we sin not, neither be ashamed nor confounded in the presence of our fathers!

רבא בתר צלותיה אמר הכי:
אלהי
עד שלא נוצרתי איני כדאי . . .
והיינו ודוי דרב המנונא זוטי ביומא דכפורי.

3. Rabba, after finishing his Tefillah, would say thus:
   My God,
   Before I was formed I was of no worth . . .
   [the text is identical to that in Appendix 2, no. 6 above.]
   And this was [also] the confession of Rab Hamnuna the Younger on the Day of Atonement.

רב ששת כי הוה יתיב בתעניתא בתר דמצלי אמר הכי:
רבון העולמים
גלוי לפניך בזמן שבית המקדש קים
אדם חוטא ומקריב קרבן
ואין מקריבין ממנו אלא חלבו ודמו ומתכפר לו
ועכשיו ישבתי בתענית ונתמעת חלבי ודמי.
יהי רצון מלפניך
שיהא חלבי ודמי שנתמעתו כאלו הקרבתיו לפניך על גבי המזבח
ותרצני.

4. Rav Sheshet, when he sat fasting, after praying the Tefillah would say:
   Master of the universe,
   It is clear to You that, when the Temple was standing,
   A person would sin and bring a sacrifice—
   Of which only the fat and blood were offered—
   And it was forgiven him.
   And now I have sat fasting so that my fat and blood have been diminished.
   May it be Your will
   That my fat and blood that have been diminished be accounted as if I had offered them up on the altar,
   And accept me.

Appendix 4

Saadia's Text For *Nefilat 'Apayyim*

Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon, 24, gives the following text to be recited in a posture of semi-prostration after reciting the Tefillah:

רחום וחנון חטאנו לפניך
רחם עלינו
נושא עון ועובר על פשע חטאנו לפניך
רחם עלינו
עשה למען שמך הגדול הגבור והנורא
שיתקדש בעולם כולו
ורחם עלינו
וכפר על חטאתינו למען שמך
אבל חטאנו עוינו הרשענו פשענו ומרדנו
וסרנו ממצותיך וממשפטיך הטובים ולא שוה לנו
ואתה צדיק על כל הבא עלינו
כי אמת עשית ואנחנו הרשענו.

ועכשיו באתי ועמדתי על פתחיך
יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו
שתפתח לי שערי רחמים ושערי תשובה
ואחזור בתשובה שלימה לפניך
תשובה שאתה רוצה בה
תשובה שאתה חפץ בה
תשובה שתחמול ותסלח לכל עונותי בשבילה
אבינו מלכנו אלהינו
חננו ועננו
אין בנו מעשים
עשה עמנו למען שמך צדקה.

Compassionate and gracious One, we have sinned against You;
Have compassion for us.
You who forgive sin and overlook transgression, we have sinned against You;
Have compassion for us.
Act for the sake of Your great, mighty, and awesome name,
That it may be sanctified throughout the entire world,
And have compassion for us.
And grant us atonement for our sins for the sake of Your name.
Indeed we have sinned, we have committed iniquities, we have done wrong, we have transgressed, we have rebelled,
We have strayed from your worthy commandments and laws,[78] and it has availed us nothing.
But You are just concerning all that has befallen us—
For You have acted faithfully, while we have done wrong (Neh 9:33).
And now I have come and stood at Your doorstep.
May it be Your will, O Lord our God,
To open for me the gates of compassion,
The gates of repentance,
That I may return to You in perfect repentance—
Repentance that You will accept;
Repentance in which You will delight;
Repentance for the sake of which You will pardon and forgive all of my sins.
Our Father, our King, our God,
Be gracious and answer us:
We have no merit.
Deal righteously with us for the sake of Your name.

78. Cf. Dan 9:5.

Appendix 5

A Brief Sample of *Taḥanun* and *Taḥanun*-Type Texts from the Cairo Genizah Fragments

1. Cambridge University Library, Taylor-Schechter Collection, K27.33, published by Solomon Schechter, "Genizah Specimens," *JQR* o.s. 10 (1898): 657.

After the text of the Tefillah (above, Appendix 1), the fragment indicates a very abbreviated confession:

תם יסגד ויקול:
חטאנו צורינו
סלח לנו יוצרינו.

[Judeo-Arabic] When he has finished [praying], he prostrates himself and says:
[Hebrew] We have sinned, our Rock!
Forgive us, our Creator!

2. Cambridge Add. 3160, no. 5, published by Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service," *HUCA* 2 (1925): 324.

The following text-type occurs twice (Mann, 308 = Cambridge Add. 3160, no. 6, and Mann, 324 = Cambridge Add. 3160, no. 5); the second, which I cite here, is the fuller of the two versions:

אל רחום שמך
אל חנון שמך
אל ארך אפים שמך
מלא רחמים רבים שמך
ועלינו נקרא שמך
ומוחל וסולח שמך:
יי עשה עמנו צדקה למען שמך
רחם
על עירך
על עמך
על עבדך
על ארצך
על מקדשך
ע' נחלתך
ע' מזבחך
ע' מעונך:
שלח פדותינו מעימך

חוס ברחמיך הרבים
ורחם עלינו
והושיענו
למען שמך הגדול הקדוש והנורא
חוסה יי על ישראל עמך
ואל תתן נחלתך לחרפה
למשל בם גוים
למה יאמרו בעמים איה אלה׳:

Compassionate God is Your name,
Gracious God is Your name,
Patient God is Your name,
[God] full of abundant compassion is Your name,
And upon us is invoked Your name,
Pardoning and forgiving [God] is Your name:
O Lord, deal righteously with us for the sake of Your name.
Have compassion
For Your city,
For Your people,
For Your servant,
For Your land,
For Your sanctuary,
For Your inheritance,
For Your altar,
For Your dwelling-place.
Send our redemption from You.
In Your abundant compassion be merciful
And have compassion for us
And save us,
For the sake of Your great, holy, and awesome name.
Have mercy on Israel Your people;
Do not let Your inheritance be put to shame
So that foreign nations rule over them.
Let not the nations say, Where is their God? (Ps 115:2).

Note that this text invokes the Thirteen Attributes at the outset, and that the theme is communal rather than personal.

3. Antonin 995 (St. Petersburg), published by Simcha Assaf, "From the Order of Prayer in the Land of Israel," in *Sefer Dinaburg* (ed. Yitzhak Baer, Yehoshua Guttmann, and Moshe Shaveh; Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1949), 123.

The following text precedes the morning psalms. The fragment begins in the middle:

[אל] חנון שמך
אל ארך אפים ש[מך] . . .

. . . שמך
יי עשה [עמנו] צדקה למען שמך
רחם
על עירך
ועל . . .
ועל מקדשך
ברחמיך הרבים
רחם עלינו
והושיענו
למען שמך הגדול
אל רחום שמך וגו'
ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה כי עליך עינינו
זכור רחמיך יי וחסדך כי מעולם המה
אל תזכר לנו עוונות ראשונים
מהר יקדמונו רחמיך כי דלונו מאד
קומה עזרתה לנו ופדנו למען חסדיך
יהי חסדך יי עלינו כאשר יחלנו לך
יי הושיעה המלך יענגו ביום קראינו
יהי שם יי מבורך מעתה ועד עולם
כי הוא ידע יצרנו זכור כי עפר אנחנו.

Compassionate [God] is Your name,
Patient God is Your n[ame, . . .]
. . . Your name,
[Deal with us] righteously for Your own sake.
Have compassion
For Your city,
And for . . .
And for Your sanctuary.
In Your abundant compassion
Have compassion for us,
And save us
For the sake of Your great name.
Compassionate God is Your name, etc.
We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon You (2 Chr 20:12).
Remember Your mercy and Your kindness, O Lord, for they are eternal (Ps 25:6).
O mind not our former iniquities;
May Your compassion hasten to our aid, for we are brought very low (Ps 79:8).
Arise and help us; redeem us as befits Your faithfulness (Ps 44:27).
May Your faithful care be with us, as we have put our hope in You (Ps 33:22).
O Lord, save! May the King answer us when we call (Ps 20:10).
May the name of the Lord be praised now and forever (Ps 113:2).
For He knows what we are made of, remembering that we are but dust (Ps 103:14).

To the cento of verses here, compare Birnbaum, *Hasiddur Hashalem*, 105–6.

4. Cambridge, Taylor-Schechter New Series, 315.177, published by Ezra Fleischer, "Qeta'im miqovtsei tefillah 'erets yisra'eliyim min hagenizah," *Kobez al yad* 13/23 (1996): 150.

The fragment gives text and instructions for an afternoon weekday service. The following confessional text appears after the Tefillah, preceded by the instructions (in Judeo-Arabic), *Afterwards one prostrates oneself and says:*

חטאתי ועויתי ופשעתי לפניך יי אלהי
מחול לעונותי
ועבר לפשעיי
וסלח לחטא[ותיי ול]אשמיי
ובטל ממני [ג]זרות קשות
וח[לצני?] מכל בני אדם הרעים
ובשרני בשורות טובות
ושים ברכה במעשה ידיי
ותניני לחן לחסד ולרחמים בעיניך ובעיני כל רואי
ושמע תפילתי וקבל תחנתי
כי אתה אל טוב וסלח ורב חסד לכל קוראיך
חטאנו צור[נו] סלח לנו [. . .] חטאנו צורנו סלח לנו יוצרנו

I have sinned; I have committed iniquity, I have transgressed before You, O Lord my God.
Pardon my iniquities;
Overlook my transgressions;
Forgive my sins and my offenses,
And cancel any harsh decrees against me.
[Save me (?)] from all evil men,
And let me hear good tidings,
And bless the work of my hands.
Grant me grace, favor, and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who behold me.
Hearken to my prayer and accept my supplication,
For you are a good, forgiving, and faithful God to all who cry out to You.
We have sinned, our Rock! Forgive us! . . .
We have sinned, our Rock! Forgive us, our Creator!

"We Do Not Even Know What To Do!": A Foray into the Early History of Taḥanun

Ruth Langer

In the contemporary orthodox Jewish prayer book, following the weekday morning Amidah, one finds an extended cluster of prayer texts as long again as the Amidah that barely receive mention in the Talmud and remain largely neglected by modern liturgical scholars.[1] These prayers collectively receive the title *taḥanun* (or the plural *taḥanunim*), a word that indicates their supplicatory and penitential nature. An exhaustive study of the evolution of this element of Jewish prayer is a desideratum but beyond the scope of this essay. Such a study requires a careful survey of the preserved medieval manuscripts[2] and early editions of prayer books[3] of all the regional Jewish rites, from the texts of the Cairo Genizah[4] to today, accompanied by a study of the relevant halakhic literature.

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1. Kurt Hruby ("Quelques notes sur le Taḥanun et la place de la prière individuelle dans la liturgie synagogale," in *Littera Judaica: In Memoriam Edwin Guggenheim* [ed. Paul Jacob and Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich; Frankfurt a.M.: Europaische Verlagsanstalt, 1964], 78–104) has published the only substantive discussion. See also Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (trans. and ed. Raymond P. Scheindlin; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), 66–70; and Issachar Jacobson, *Netiv binah* [Hebrew] (5 vols.; Tel Aviv: Sinai, 1968–83), 1:346–56 (English version: B. S. Jacobson, *The Weekday Siddur: An Exposition and Analysis of Its Structure Contents, Language and Ideas* [2nd ed.; Tel Aviv: Sinai, 1978], 271–85). However, none of these incorporates the evidence from the Cairo Genizah, evidence that undercuts all of their explanations.

2. Collected in microfilm from libraries and private collections around the world in the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.

3. There is no equivalently comprehensive collection of early editions, but Judaica libraries with significant collections of rare books often have a fair sample among their holdings. Some are available on microfilm, and some important exemplars are now available digitally on library Web sites. See especially the JNUL Digitized Book Repository, http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il/eng/digibook.html.

4. Jewish tradition forbids destroying the written form of God's name. Thus, most religious texts—and in some places, anything with Hebrew writing on it—must be stored away or buried once they become unusable. The Jews of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Fustat (Old Cairo) used the synagogue's attic as a genizah in which such documents were stored, some going back over a millennium. This collection came to scholarly attention in 1895 when it was purchased

This study will undertake only the first step of that project, an examination of the texts of *taḥanun* as they appear in the genizah. The results of this examination will allow us to read the rabbinic texts discussing the origins of *taḥanun* with a different set of presuppositions. Earlier liturgists had interpreted these rabbinic texts against the versions of *taḥanun* that emerged from the medieval world, unaware that such texts simply are not represented in the genizah or in geonic literature. The direct lines they suggest between classical rabbinic sources and the latter forms of *taḥanun* thus cannot be supported. What we will see is that the earliest texts of *taḥanun* are dominated by a strongly penitential voice, a voice that is significantly diluted as many of the regional rites evolve.

Taḥanun Today

Because so little has been written on *taḥanun*, we begin with modern texts as a point of contrast. Over the past half millennium, the map of the Jewish liturgical rites has shifted dramatically, in most cases resulting in the erasure of entire regional rites and most local sub-rites. Table 1 summarizes the structure of *taḥanun* in representative texts of the five major rites that survive today.[5] It indicates only the opening lines of each prayer composition. Numbers represent the order in which these texts appear in the individual rites. Where the texts are identifiably related but vary significantly one from the other in their specific wording, the number in the column more to the right is preceded by a tilde (~). Where the Monday/Thursday rite is not simply an expansion of that recited on other weekdays[6] (i.e., in the Italian rites), I designate the parts of the shorter version with lowercase letters.

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and moved, primarily to the University of Cambridge, but with smaller collections going to Jewish research libraries around the world. The cataloguing of its contents is only now reaching completion, and the texts are being digitized and made available on the Internet in the Friedberg Genizah Project (http://genizah.org/). From their public debut, the contents of the genizah have provided invaluable and often revolutionary contributions to our knowledge of the medieval Jewish world.

5. The five prayer books compared here do not begin to represent the variations found within these rites. Where possible I have used editions by contemporary Israeli liturgical scholars, that is, for the Ashkenazi rite, for Nusaḥ Sfard, for Minhag Sefarad (all by Shlomo Tal) and the Yemenite rite. The Italian rite prayer book used at the Italian synagogue in Jerusalem is one currently printed in Italy.

6. *Taḥanun* is only recited on weekdays—and there is, in addition, a substantial (and complex) list of weekdays on which it is not recited. In all rites, a substantially expanded form is recited on Monday and Thursday mornings, services at which the Torah is also read. *Taḥanun* is also recited in the shorter form at weekday afternoon services. It always follows the Amidah, the prayer of eighteen (nineteen) benedictions that forms the core of every service.

Table 1: *Taḥanun*'s Structure in Examples of Today's Rites

	Ashkenaz[7]	**Nusaḥ S'fard**[8]	**Minhag Sefarad**[9]	**Italy**[10]	**Yemen**[11]
Short Confessional: אשמנו		1	1	4, b	4
(Monday and Thursday insert): What shall we say before You . . . May it be Your will . . . to forgive us . . . : מה נאמר לפניך . . . יהי רצון . . . שתמחול לנו מלפניך			2	~5, c	
(Monday and Thursday) Remove from us Your anger and Your wrath (litany): תכלה ממנו אפך וחמתך				6	
13 Qualities of God: י"ג מדות		2	3	a	
Monday and Thursday only:					
Short Confessional: אשמנו	1				
13 Qualities of God: י"ג מדות	2				
And He is merciful: והוא רחום[12]	3	6	15		6

7. According to *Siddur rinat Yisrael: nusaḥ Aškenaz* (ed. Shlomo Tal; 3rd ed.; Jerusalem: Morešet, 1976), 79–90. Aškenaz is the Hebrew term for Germany; this rite spreads from Germany eastward. It is the predominant rite in North America.

8. According to *Siddur rinat Yisrael*, 65–75. This is the rite adopted by the eighteenth-century Hasidic movement of Eastern Europe. It is also called the Rite of the "Ari," of Rabbi Yiṣḥaq Luria, a leading sixteenth-century kabbalist. It is fundamentally an Ashkenazi rite, with certain elements of the Sefardi rite and various kabbalistic elements added.

9. According to *Siddur rinat Yisrael: nusaḥ Hasefardim Ve'edot Hamizraḥ* (ed. Shlomo Tal; 2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Morešet, 1982), 71–81. Sefarad is the Hebrew designation of the Iberian peninsula, especially Spain. Iberian Jews brought their rite with them after their expulsion from Spain in 1492, and it became the predominant rite of the southern Mediterranean and Middle East.

10. According to both *Formulario di Orazioni: Secondo il rito italiano* (ed. D. Camerini; Turin, 1995), 85–96; and *Siddur bene Romi: Giorni feriali e Shabbat* (ed. Riccardo di Segni and Elia Richetti; Milan: Morasha, 2002), 39–52.

11. According to *Siddur tefillah nusaḥ Baladi siaḥ Yerušalayim*, Part 1 (ed. Joseph Kapaḥ; Tel Aviv: Makhon Mišnat Harambam, 1993), 37ff. According to Moše Gavra, "Nusaḥ nefilat 'apayim b'siddurei Teman," *Šanah b'šanah* (1999): 429–33; this represents the original (pre-kabbalistic) Yemenite rite.

12. Concludes with Dan 9:15–19.

	Ashkenaz	Nusaḥ S'fard	Minhag Sefarad	Italy	Yemen
Our Father, merciful Father, show us a good omen: אבינו האב הרחמן, הראנו אות לטובה	4	7	16		
Please look and be merciful: הבט נא רחם נא	5	~8	~17		
Please, O compassionate and merciful King: אנא מלך חנון ורחום	6	9	~18		
Merciful and compassionate God, have mercy on us: אל רחום וחנון רחם עלינו	7	~10			
There is none like You, compassionate and merciful: אין כמוך חנון ורחום	8	11	~19		
The One who opens a hand in repentance: הפותח יד בתשובה	9	12	~20		7
Hear O Israel: שמע (by all, out loud)					8
נפילת אפים—*Nefilat Apayim* (Falling on one's "nostrils")					
Sunday–Friday also					
2 Sam 24:14: David said to Gad	10	3			
Merciful and compassionate One, I have sinned before You: רחום וחנון חטאתי לפניך	11	4	4 (plural)	7, d (plural)	
Psalm 25			5+130:8	8, e	
Psalm 6 (without its superscription)	12	5			
Monday and Thursday only:					
Eternal God of Israel, turn from Your anger (poetic text): ה' אלהי ישראל שוב מחרון אפך	13	13			~9, ~11 (congregation repeats)
Piyyuṭ—different for Monday or Thursday					10

	Ashkenaz	Nusaḥ S'fard	Minhag Sefarad	Italy	Yemen
Do not be so wrathful, Eternal: אל תקצף ה' עד מאוד					12
Psalm 130				9[13]	
Though our iniquities testify against us . . . (cento): אם עוונינו ענו בנו				10	
Remember the covenant with Abraham: זכור ברית אברהם				11	
Our Father, the merciful father, save us for the sake of Your name (poetic): אבינו אב הרחמן הושיענו למען שמך				12	
Psalm 20				13	
Before You I bow, prostrate, and supplicate the Master of the universe: לפניך אני כורע ומשתחוה ומתחנן אדון עולם[14]					1, a
Sunday–Friday also:					
Psalm 28:9				14, f	
Our Father our King (4 lines): אבינו מלכינו			7	15, g	13, b (now customary)
And we do not know what to do (cento): ואנחנו לא נדע	16	16	8	16, h	14, c
Monday and Thursday only:					
Now, Eternal our God, who took Your people from Egypt: ועתה ה' אלהינו אשר הוצאת את עמך מארץ מצרים				1	
Incline, my God, Your ear and listen: הטה אלהי אזנך ושמע				2	

13. The 2002 edition instructs one to raise one's head and recite this in a loud voice.

14. The instructions refer to this as *nefilat panim* (falling on the face). Gavra ("*Nusaḥ nefilat 'apayim,*" 430–31) reports the tradition that this cento was established by Ezra and his court. Until 1583, it alone constituted the text for "falling on one's nostrils."

	Ashkenaz	Nusaḥ S'fard	Minhag Sefarad	Italy	Yemen
13 Qualities of God: י״ג מדות			9, 11, 13	3	2, 5
People of faith are lost (poetic): אנשי אמונה אבדו			10		
We are confused by the evils (poetic): תמהנו מרעות			12		
Our God and God of our ancestors, do not destroy us (poetic): אא״א אל תעש עמנו כלה			14		3

What is immediately evident from this table is that, although there is a fundamental similarity in the types of texts employed in *taḥanun*, there is little structural unity among the various rites. The precise texts preserved and the order of their recitation vary significantly.[15] As should be expected, the stable part of *taḥanun* is pretty much identical with the parts that the genizah texts allow us to identify as its earliest segments: the confession of sins, the direct plea for God's forgiveness, and a composition beginning "And we do not know what to do." Thus, although the lack of direct rabbinic discussion of this part of the daily prayers meant that its text had no halakhic boundaries placed on it, we can discern a received tradition common to these rites and on which they elaborated, sometimes very independently one of another.[16]

Origins

As Richard Sarason has indicated in his introductory essay to this volume, the Bible primarily presents penitential prayer as the prayer of the individual, not the community (except in times of great distress). In the biblical schema, sacrifices were the primary locus of Jewish communal worship of God. We know precious little about the degree to which verbal elements might have accompanied this. We can only speculate about the precise role played by Psalms and psalmic texts in the Jerusalem Temple. The rabbinic liturgical task was primarily to compensate for the now suspended formal communal sacrificial worship. Their innovative verbal communal prayer performed this task and consequently received their attention (and the attention of most modern liturgists).

15. Such variation is to be expected. It is characteristic in the medieval world even of prayers mandated by the Talmud.

16. A very similar statement can be made about the rituals developed for taking the Torah scroll from the ark to its place of reading. See my discussion of this in Hebrew: "Early Medieval Celebrations of Torah in the Synagogue: A Study of the Rituals of the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* and *Massekhet Soferim*," *Keništa* 2 (2003): 99–118.

However, individuals still had legitimate reasons for personal prayer. Would these find contexts within this rabbinic system, or did they have to function outside of it, just as they functioned outside of the sacrificial worship of the Temple? The primary talmudic discussion of this question appears in *b. ʿAbod. Zar.* 7b–8a.[17] Here, the discussion of concern to us begins with a citation of a *baraita*[18] in which Naḥum the Mede[19] declares, "One should request one's personal needs in *šomeaʿ tefillah*" (the final blessing in the intermediate petitionary section of the Amidah, which asks that God hearken to human prayer). For our purposes here, the phrase, שואל אדם צרכיו "one requests one's (personal) needs," is key. Is "requesting one's (personal) needs" a penitential act? Not necessarily, but as we have seen, penitential prayer and petitionary prayer do not exist in completely distinct realms. The presence of one aspect does not preclude the other.

The *gemara* compares Naḥum the Mede's statement[20] with two other *baraitot,* both in the names of early tannaitic rabbis, contemporary with Naḥum but somewhat younger: "Rabbi Eliezer teaches that one should first request one's needs and then pray"; and "Rabbi Joshua says that one should first pray and then request one's personal needs." The *gemara* presumes that both sages are referring to the specific context of the Amidah, as had their predecessor, Naḥum the Mede, in his more explicit teaching. Unable to harmonize these two traditions, the *gemara* ultimately rejects both possibilities and declares apodictically that one voices one's personal requests in *šomeaʿ tefillah*—the position of Naḥum the Mede.

The discussion does not end here, though, for the *gemara* then juxtaposes a tradition cited in the name of Rav, a first-generation Amora (early third century), that even though one ought to voice one's personal requests in *šomeaʿ tefillah*, if one instead voices them at the end of each appropriate blessing, the prayer is still valid. However, an alternative tradition in Rav's name restricts this to prayers for healing and for sustenance. The discussion then closes with what for our purposes is the most important ruling. "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi[21] said: Even though they said that one voices one's personal requests in *šomeaʿ tefillah*, if one happens to voice them after one's [recitation of the] Amidah, even if they are [lengthy] like

17. See too the shorter version of this discussion in *b. Ber.* 31a. Both independently hearken to but do not directly cite a parallel recorded in *t. Ber.* 3:6. Neither of the Berakhot discussions gives explicit tannaitic attributions, and the amoraic attributions differ in the two *gemara* texts. The *ʿAbodah Zarah* text's details were more determinative of subsequent Jewish practice.

18. A *baraita* is a tannaitic tradition that was not included in the Mishnah.

19. Second half of the first century C.E. See David Bornstein, "Nahum the Mede," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik; 2nd ed.; Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 14:759. Internet version accessed June 4, 2007.

20. Which it had initially cited in the context of a very different discussion.

21. The parallel discussion on *b. Ber.* 31a attributes this statement to Rav. Either way, this is a third-century discussion.

the Order of Yom Kippur prayers, one may do so."[22] Thus, the talmudic tradition received by later generations effectively rejects the possibility of adding personal prayers before the formal communal prayers; it limits their insertion into the Amidah to a few places; but it concludes with a strong preference that personal prayers of any length be recited after the completion of the formal communal prayers.

There is still a significant distance between these *ad hoc* personal prayers voiced as needed after the Amidah and the lengthy *taḥanun* prayer texts described above. Talmudic literature does preserve some personal prayers of the rabbis, which they apparently recited after the Amidah, but these do not receive the collective label of *taḥanun(im)*.[23] There is little evidence in classical rabbinic literature for a formal, named liturgical element that encompasses these personal prayers. *Nefilat 'apayim* (falling on one's nostrils, or alternatively, *nefilat panim*, falling on one's face, both indicating full prostration), a term that comes to define at least parts of this liturgical element, does appear in this literature, but in other contexts or without any obvious liturgical content.[24] In the Bible as well as in most of rabbinic literature, "*taḥanun/im*" is a generic word for supplication. The Jerusalem Talmud preserves a tradition that suggests that *taḥanun* is a lesser form of prayer, for Abba bar Rav Huna teaches, "One under the influence of alcohol should not pray (the Amidah), and if he does pray, his prayer is merely *taḥanunim*" (*Y. Ter.* 1:4, 40d). We come a bit closer to seeing *taḥanun* as a formal liturgical element later in the talmudic period. *B. Ber.* 29b cites Rav Naḥman bar Yiṣḥak (mid-fourth-century Babylonia) as distinguishing between people who are or are not accustomed to reciting *taḥanunim* after their Amidah.[25] However, there is still no evidence of a tradition of what one says at this point.

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22. The Tosefta's version of this, *t. Ber.* 3:6, reads אומר דברים (says words) where our text reads "requests one's needs." Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta' kif'šuta*, vol. 1 (2nd ed.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1993), 31, reads "words" in most instances in this context to mean "praises," but says that this one can refer to "praises or supplications." (See also the note to line 27 in his critical edition.) These two texts are obviously closely related, but *'Abodah Zarah* here is not citing the Tosefta. In addition to this significant tightening of the type of personal prayer discussed, the talmudic text also attributes the tannaitic traditions to specific sages.

23. Several of these prayers do become part of the ongoing liturgical tradition, but only one, the prayer of Mar son of Ravina, is still recited at the conclusion of the Amidah (*b. Ber.* 17a).

24. Most discussions point to *b. Meg.* 22a, which discusses Rav's refusal to join a Babylonian congregation in this posture *after* the Torah reading on a public fast day. As *taḥanun* as we know it was not recited on public fast days and was always prefaced to the Torah reading, this text must be referring to something else. However, what that "something else" might be is not obvious either.

25. The question at hand is whether, if they erred in the last three blessings of their Amidah by forgetting to add the appropriate prayer for the New Month (into the first blessing of the concluding triad), they are still in a situation of prayer and may repeat only the last three blessings, or whether they have concluded their prayer and then must repeat the entire Amidah.

In the geonic period,[26] we do find specific legislation about *taḥanun* as a liturgical element. *Massekhet Soferim*[27] 21:1 mentions that one does not recite *taḥanunim* during the entire month of Nisan. Other texts broaden the prohibition to reciting *taḥanunim* during any period of joy, such as Nisan and Tishrei.[28] These restrictions do not necessarily suggest a fixed text, but in the following references, there are certainly particular compositions under discussion. Geonic literature still employs the language of *taḥanunim* more broadly than becomes customary. A responsum ascribed to Rav Hayya bar Naḥšon Gaon suggests that certain *taḥanunim* were added to the liturgy on Yom Kippur and on public fast days to compensate for the fact that the rabbis no longer felt competent to release people from their oaths and vows.[29] Similarly, Rav Hayya (bar Šerira) Gaon (d. 1038) was asked about whether it would make more sense to recite the *taḥanunim* and "verses of mercy" during the day instead of in the middle of the night during the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.[30] In both of these cases, we would label these liturgies *seliḥot*, penitential prayers, rather than *taḥanunim*, supplicatory prayers. However, the geonic use of these terms points to their significant overlap in content and function. It is our distinctions that are overly precise.

However, restrictions on reciting *taḥanunim* during seasons of joy do apply to the prayers recited privately after the Amidah, what becomes known as *taḥanun*, but not to *seliḥot,* whose primary recitation is during the High Holy Day period in (Elul and) Tishrei. The liturgical location of the latter is either embedded in the repetition of the Amidah or fully distinct from it. The Geonim also debated whether one could "fall on one's face"—that is, recite *taḥanun*—after the weekday evening prayer, although they acknowledged that the people generally did not do so, preferring the afternoon prayer as a time of divine favor and, unlike the evening service, as an obligatory time of prayer.[31] They ruled against "falling on

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Rav Naḥman bar Yiṣḥak suggests that even if one has stepped back from the place where one has recited the Amidah, if one continues with *taḥanunim*, one is still in a situation of prayer.

26. From ca. 700 to 1038 C.E.

27. The date of this text is significantly disputed. It may well be the result of a series of editings.

28. *Šu"t šaʿarei tešuvah* #337 (Bar Ilan CD-ROM 14th ed.). B. M. Lewin, *Oṣar Hageonim*, Megillah, 35, suggests that this is ascribed there to Hayya Gaon. He also notes the unreliable nature of this text, which may be a forgery.

29. *Tešuvot Hageonim haḥadašot* (ed. S. Emanuel), #58, pp. 65–67. Hayya bar Naḥšon was Gaon of Sura 881–891 (all datings of Geonim are according to Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998], p. 344). Emanuel was unable to identify the Aramaic *piyyuṭ* named in the responsum.

30. *Tešuvot Hageonim haḥadašot* (ed. S. Emanuel), #190, p. 260. Hayya (bar Šerira) Gaon supports keeping the recitation at night rather than expecting poor people to come to synagogue during working hours. See also the *Tešuvot Hageonim mizraḥ umaʿarav*, #122 (Bar Ilan CD ROM).

31. B. M. Lewin, *Oṣar Hageonim, Megillah* #124, citing the *Manhig*, *Šibolei haleqet*, and the *Tania*, in the name of Sar Šalom Gaon (Sura, 847 or 851–57).

one's face" following the afternoon service when that evening was the beginning of the New Month, a festival, or the Sabbath.[32] At the same time that this growing set of ultimately complex rulings about when to recite *taḥanun* suggests to us a widespread integration of this element into actual practice, we also find Rav Natronai Gaon (857–865) ruling that the public recitation of *taḥanun* is a matter of personal (or communal?) choice.[33]

Geonic concern with *taḥanun* extends also to defining what it means to "fall on one's nostrils." This posture derives from the world of the Bible, where supplicant humans prostrated themselves fully before other powerful humans or divine beings as a sign of abject humility or self-abnegation.[34] Biblical texts describing sacrificial worship, though, describe human prostration primarily as *hištaḥaviah*.[35] Prostration with arms and legs spread was a dominant element of the ritual responses of the Jerusalem Temple, in the context of the sacrifices themselves, but also in the rituals for entering the sacred complex.[36] However, for the most part, rabbinic rituals merely call for bowing. Uri Ehrlich suggests that social change explains the rabbinic preference, for in the Greco-Roman world bowing was common and prostration rare.[37] Full prostration "continues to be acceptable in unusual religious circumstances in which emphasis is placed on God's remoteness and attributes of judgment" as on public fast days or for the individual supplicant.[38]

What was the actual difference between "falling on one's face (or nostrils)" and prostration as normally practiced in the Temple? Tannaitic sources describing Temple rituals distinguish between prostration, bowing, and kneeling.[39] *M. Yoma* 6:2 in our printed editions adds "falling on one's face" to this list, but this seems to be a late addition to the text, copied from the *Seder Haʿavodah* of the Yom Kippur *musaf* service.[40] Answers to our question begin only in geonic lit-

32. B. M. Lewin, *Oṣar Hageonim, Megillah* #123, citing *Toratan shel Rišonim*, II:42.

33. *Tešuvot Rav Natronai Gaon* (ed. Robert Brody; Jerusalem: Ofeq, 1994), OH 37, I:145. Natronai labels this *rešut*, that is, permitted or optional, but not obligatory (*ḥovah*) or even commanded (*miṣvah*). The rabbinic tradition considers the core elements of daily prayer to be obligatory, i.e., a full halakhic requirement. The Amidah of the evening prayer, originally labeled *rešut*, eventually is considered a *miṣvah*.

34. 1 Sam 20:41; 25:23; 2 Sam 14:4. The Bible also uses language of falling on one's face with the same intent.

35. Uri Ehrlich, *The Nonverbal Language of Prayer: A New Approach to Jewish Liturgy* (trans. Dena Ordan; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 38ff.

36. Ibid., 39. For a summary of the details, see the entry "*Hištaḥava'ah*" in the *Enṣiqlopedia Talmudit*, 11:233–38 (on Bar Ilan CD Rom). Add to these sources Ben Sira 50:15–21.

37. Ehrlich, *Nonverbal Language of Prayer,* 44.

38. Ibid., 45.

39. See, for instance, *m. Tamid* 7:3, with reference to the lay witnessing of the daily ritual, or *t. Šeqal.* 2:17, which distinguishes between prostration and bowing. The sources also mention kneeling.

40. *M. Yoma* 6:2 in its printed editions (and as it appears in the Vilna Romm Tal-

erature and seem to differentiate between turning one's head to the side or not. But these answers are also complicated by concerns about whether one may prostrate oneself at all on a floor made of cut stones outside the Temple.[41] If one may not actually prostate oneself, what does one do instead? Saadia Gaon teaches: One places one's left knee on the ground as one does when sitting, and folds one's right knee on it as one does when kneeling, so that he is half kneeling and half sitting.[42] However, the majority of geonic responsa prescribe a posture of lying on one's left side with one's face elevated above the ground somewhat.[43] This preserves elements of the biblical prostration but eliminates concerns that one might seem to worship something on the floor itself. However, the Judeo-Arabic instructions common in the liturgical texts of the genizah merely indicate that one should bow down (ויסגד).[44] The preferred posture continues to evolve. Modern Ashkenazi custom is to lean over while sitting, hiding one's face against one's arm (which arm depends on local custom and a number of factors). In this rite, prostration is reserved for distinct locations in the High Holy Day liturgies.[45]

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mud, 66a) suggests a sequence of postures where all first kneel (כורעים) and then prostrate (ומשתחוים), and then fall on their faces (ונופלים על פניהם). However, major manuscripts of the Mishnah (Ms. Budapest, Akademia, Kaufmann A 50 and Ms. Parma Biblioteca Palatina 3178 Codice de Rossi 138—both available on the JNUL Web site's "Online Treasury of Talmudic Manuscripts" http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/talmud) do not include the second half of this Mishnah, including these words. The Parma manuscript does indicate that text is missing, as it ends וגו'. In the early printed edition from Naples with the commentary of Maimonides (Soncino, 1492), found in the JNUL's "Digitized Book Repository," these words do appear. Of the talmudic manuscripts available on the library's "Online Treasure of Talmudic Manuscripts" (as of June 25, 2007), only Ms. Jewish Theological Seminary Rab. 1632 provides the full text of the Mishnah, and here too this line is missing. Of the early Talmud editions in their "Digitized Book Repository," the Bomberg edition, printed in Venice, 1520–23, p. 66a, does include the full text of the Mishnah, but without this line, while the Basel 1578–81 edition, p. 66a does include the line. This all suggests that the lack of comment on this line reflects its late addition to the text. On the *seder ha'avodah,* see *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur* (ed. and trans. Michael D. Swartz and Joseph Yahalom; University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 17, 59, 63, 67.

41. See, for example, *Tešuvot Hageonim haḥadašot* (ed. S. Emanuel), #117, pp. 157–58.

42. *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon*, 24.

43. See the texts collected in B. M. Lewin, *Oṣar Hageonim,* vol. 1, *Berakhot* (Jerusalem: Wagshall, 1984), ##229–33, pp. 82–84.

44. In the texts surveyed here, "falling on one's face/nostrils" appears only in the Hebrew directions in the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. E. Daniel Goldschmidt; Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1971; repr. 2004), 37; and in the modern Hebrew translation of this Arabic term in the *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* (ed. I. Davidson et al.; Jerusalem: Meqiṣei Nirdamim; Reuven Mass, 1985), 24.

45. See the *Beit Yosef*'s summary of the medieval discussion, OH 131; for modern discussions, see the supercommentaries there and to the *Šulḥan Arukh* 131:1. The *Mišnah Berurah*, a turn-of-the-twentieth-century Ashkenazi text, still admits that local custom should determine the precise posture used.

Earliest Texts

Because of the complexity of the genizah evidence, I present the texts themselves in Tables 2 and 3. Each of these tables contains a main text and its English translation, divided into its segments. Following each segment are the relevant critical notes, in Hebrew and an English summary (italicized), comparing this segment to the available evidence from other documents (themselves listed after the table). Comment on individual points of interest within these segments is also to be found there or in the footnotes to the table, allowing our narrative discussion to focus on the larger lessons to be gleaned from these texts.

As the liturgical element that we know as *taḥanun* appears in the genizah[46] and in geonic-era texts, it consists of three segments. Evidence for the Babylonian rite,[47] table 2, suggests that these parts are the following:

I. The confessional statement רחום וחנון חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו ("Merciful and Compassionate One, we have sinned before You, have mercy on us"), often in a significantly elaborated form;
II. The penitential statement אבינו מלכינו חננו ועננו אין בנו מעשים עשה עמנו צדקה וחסד ("Our Father our King, have compassion on us and answer us; we have no [worthy] deeds; act with us with righteousness and loving-kindness");
III. And a cento of verses beginning ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה ("We do not [even] know what to do"), sometimes with directions that the precentor recite each verse for the congregation to echo.[48]

46. I thank Dr. Uri Ehrlich and the Jewish Liturgy Project at Ben Gurion University for the references to the genizah texts (in Spring 2007). To the extent possible, the research here represents a comprehensive survey of what is currently catalogued from the liturgical manuscripts of the genizah and available in microfilm in libraries in the United States. My thanks also to the librarians at the Jewish Theological Seminary for making their collection available to me. I was able to check all but one reference. Because we searched the database for the literary category לקט פסוקים (cento) and for the specific composition ואנחנו לא נדע, the search missed any text like that published by Solomon Schechter, "Geniza Specimens," JQR o.s. 10 (1898): 657–58, that merely directs that one recite "verses."

47. There is no clear-cut evidence for multiple Babylonian rites of this ritual, unlike the evidence for other parts of the synagogue service. While there is significant variation among the manuscripts, they do not form the consistent clusters that would suggest identifiable subrites. The one text substantially different from all the others is that of the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*. However, our single genizah manuscript of the appropriate part of the liturgy begins after the point of substantial difference. Otherwise, as is commonly accepted, the manuscripts of this prayer book probably preserve the rites of their copyists, not of the Gaon himself. See Daniel Goldschmidt's introduction to his edition of *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*.

48. See, for example, Ms. JTS ENA 2017.8, or the Hebrew instructions in the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. Goldschmidt), 38, or the partially Aramaic version in Ms. Cambridge T-S 10 H 1.6.

The rite of the Land of Israel,[49] table 3, was apparently somewhat less scripted, consisting of the following:

I. A cento-like composition of verses and liturgical phrases (or pseudo-verses) setting the context.
II. A confession חטאנו צורינו סלח לנו יוצרינו ("We have sinned, O our Rock; forgive us, O our Creator"), introduced by a historical retrospective drawn from Neh 9:6–8a and Exod 32, followed by personal petitions, sometimes fully unscripted.
III. Recitation of a cento of verses, sometimes scripted as beginning ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה, as in the Babylonian rite.

As is common in manuscripts of the genizah, there is good evidence for hybrid rites, or versions of one rite that have incorporated some element(s) of the other. Perhaps the private recitation of much of this rite generated the enormous variety in some parts. Jewish liturgy was an oral, not a written, phenomenon, at least until the genizah period, and, for many individuals, until printed prayer books became common and affordable. Therefore, privately recited rituals had little context in which to gather a wide consensus regarding their texts. With the exceptions of the prayer books of the Geonim, of Amram and Saadia, the texts we have received were most likely written for private use, not as models for others. Therefore, we cannot presume that they made any claim to broad authority.

In linguistic style, in their significant reliance on biblical models of penitential prayer, in vocabulary, in theme, and by allusion or direct citation, these prayers show substantial continuity with Jewish penitential prayer of earlier periods. As is characteristic of rabbinic liturgy, the entirety of the ritual is voiced in Hebrew, not in a vernacular. This itself may have encouraged the emergence of fixed texts for those not sufficiently educated in this language of learning to voice their personal needs in it. The rather simple poetic elaborations on the central confessions in both rites suggest an origin among those reciting the prayers rather than among more polished and professional synagogue poets. While the occasional bits of alphabetical acrostic that appear in some of the Babylonian texts suggest more careful compositions, the sheer variety of possibilities apparent in the manuscripts and the lack of complete acrostics suggest that the form emerged from more free-form elaborations.

The element fully common to both rites, part III, is also the element whose literary structure is apparently novel. This composition belongs to a class of liturgical texts that are constructed almost entirely out of direct citations of biblical verses, usually complete. Such compositions do not occur in the core of rabbinic

49. The genizah's holdings largely represent the increasingly universally dominant rite of the Babylonian Geonim as well as, in much smaller numbers, the rite of the Land of Israel (often called the Palestinian rite). The Ben Ezra Synagogue that housed the genizah followed this rite into the thirteenth century, long after its disappearance elsewhere.

liturgy, in those parts that are well defined by the close of the Talmud. Rather, they occur around the margins, in the *pesuqei d'zimra* (verses[!] of song) preceding the morning service, in the *taḥanun* prayers that follow the Amidah, in rituals surrounding the Torah reading, in the *seliḥot* for periods of penitence, and so on. Thus, these compositions are not restricted to penitential prayer, but they do play a significant role in it. While a precise dating of the emergence of this form is not possible, its appearance at these points in the service suggests that it becomes common not before the late amoraic period. It becomes the dominant form of Karaite prayer. The fact that rabbanite Jews never associate the form with these opponents suggests that it was well established as a mode of Jewish prayer before the emergence of this group as a source of competition.[50]

The modern Hebrew term for such compositions is לקט פסוקים, literally "a collection of verses," often translated in English as "florilegium." However, I suggest that another literary form from late antiquity, the cento, better corresponds to our phenomenon. Where Latin centos would reuse language of a classical author, often Virgil, to write a totally new composition, the Hebrew liturgical equivalent takes entire verses from the Bible and juxtaposes them to construct a new composition. A subset of these compositions is indeed properly described as florilegia, literally, a bouquet or anthology, when these collections of verses dance around an obvious common word or theme, like the *'ašrei* (happy is . . .) verses prefixed to Psalm 145,[51] or the *seliḥah*, זכור רחמיך ה' וחסדיך ("Remember Your mercies, Eternal One, and Your loving-kindness") with its repetition of "remember."[52] An example in the *taḥanun* texts appears in one exemplar of the rite of the Land of Israel, where the words ה' הוא האלהים ("the Eternal is the [only] God") appear in each verse.[53] In the cento, in contrast, while repetition of a word often is a clue to the intended meaning of the composition, the composition includes several different such clusters, often interlinked with one another in order to express a more complex meaning. Discerning the meaning of a cento is not always simple. The reliance on complete verses means that the composition often contains text that is extraneous to this meaning.[54]

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50. Dating this emergence, and especially the emergence of Karaite prayer in the forms known today, is a complex matter. Karaites definitely formed a group of concern to the rabbanite Geonim by the early tenth century, but their history probably began about two centuries earlier.

51. While most Jews today are familiar with only two verses here, the Italian rites have three, and some genizah texts include as many as nine!

52. Recited in the traditional Ashkenazi rite following the last recitation of God's thirteen attributes on fast days, in the daily *seliḥot* of the High Holy Day season, and on Yom Kippur at the Kol Nidre service, and then at the beginning of the *seliḥot* in the morning, additional, and afternoon services. See the *Maḥzor rinat Yisrael: nusaḥ Aškenaz; Yom Kippur* (ed. Shlomo Tal; Jerusalem: Moreshet, 1982), 69, 196, 283, 327; and every service in Abraham Rosenfeld, *The Authorised Selichot for the Whole Year* (New York: Judaica Press, 1988).

53. See table 3, variants to part I from Ms. Cambridge T-S H 8.87.

54. For a fuller argument about this terminology and the interpretative challenge of the

How does this apply to our cento? Saadia's text will form the basis for our discussion (Babylonian rite, part III). It is by far the most common among our genizah exemplars, even among texts that otherwise vary significantly. However, some of the variations in the details of this text as it appears in the genizah seem to be related to the forms in which this composition appears in the European rites, the forms that eventually become predominant. Only the Yemenite rite preserves this precise version because this is what Maimonides included in the liturgical text accompanying his *Mišneh Torah*,[55] their liturgical model. We cannot claim that Saadia's text is more "original" and that other variants represent deliberate alterations to it. More likely, there were multiple versions transmitted orally and this one became more accepted in the world of the genizah because of Saadia's personal authority. There are indications in some sources that, unlike the rest of *taḥanun*, this prayer was recited out loud, with the congregation echoing the precentor. This would have encouraged the emergence of a text with a higher degree of fixity and authority than that of the parts of this liturgy recited privately.

This composition as it appears here is entirely biblical. With one exception, all the quotations are of complete verses. The only partial verse is the first, here no doubt truncated because the beginning of the verse sets an overly specific military context.[56] However, compositions of this sort often do not truncate verses, even where it would help the composition. A prime example is in the liturgy surrounding the Torah reading, where both Ashkenazi and Sefardi Jews include the entirety of Num 10:35. However, Ashkenazi Jews emphasize the beginning of the verse, reciting, "When the ark was to set out," as the Torah is taken out of its ark, while Sefardi Jews embed this verse in a number of others beginning with "arise," and therefore emphasize the second half of the verse, "Arise, Eternal! May Your enemies be scattered, and may Your foes flee before You!" We should also point out that the version of our cento that becomes common in European rites includes another truncated verse, the last three words of Hab 3:2, ברוגז רחם תזכור ("Though angry, may You remember compassion"). *Minhag Sefarad* and *Nusaḥ S'fard* elaborate poetically on this, thus introducing nonbiblical material into the cento. Nonbiblical liturgical language appears also in Amram's text at a different point, but in a verse-like unit. This sort of "pseudo-verse" is common in this genre and often functions as part of its vocabulary, appearing in multiple com-

cento, see my article, "Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers: Their History and Function," in *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into Its History and Interaction* (ed. Albert Gerhards and Clemens Leonhard; Jewish and Christian Perspectives 15; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 63–90.

55. See the edition published by E. D. Goldschmidt, "The Oxford Manuscript of Maimonides' Book of Prayer" [Hebrew], reprinted in his *On Jewish Liturgy: Essays on Prayer and Religious Poetry* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1980), 204.

56. 2 Chr 20:12: "O our God, surely You will punish them, for we are powerless before this great multitude that has come against us, *and do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You*."

positions.[57] Language that no longer even pretends to be biblical may represent a breakdown of the aesthetic of this form and generally first appears much later.

Word clusters do suggest meaning here: forms of זכר ("remember") appear in vv. 2, 3, and 9; forms of חסד ("loving-kindness") appear in vv. 2, 4, and 5; forms of רחם ("mercy") in vv. 2 and 3; forms of עון ("iniquity") in vv. 3 and 6, to which should be added חטאותינו ("our sins") in v. 10; forms of עזר ("help") in vv. 4 and 10; various verbs for redemption and salvation, in vv. 4 (פדה), 8 and 10 (ישע), and 10 (הצילנו). Verses 2 and 9 contrast human knowledge with that of God. The contrast between human helplessness (vv. 1, 3, 6, 9) and divine power (v. 4—especially in the contrast between the end of 3 and the opening of 4–6, 7, 8, 9, 10) is also stark. Throughout, there is a strong communal presence of humans, in the echoing use of first person plural pronouns and possessives (vv. 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10), combined with a second person address to God in both imperatives and pronouns (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10). Note, however, that several verses appear verbatim even though they speak about God in the third person (6, 8, 9). In the earlier literary forms typical of Second Temple and talmudic-era reuse of Scripture, these verses would have been adjusted in person and number to their new context.

In our case, the obvious message hardly needs this analysis to be clear. The cento is penitential, calling on those aspects of the divine character that would lead to forgiving of human sin, and then calling on God to be mindful of human weakness and forgive that sin, thus saving/redeeming the human community from their current condition. Although the human voice begins with an expression of helplessness, the composition also expresses certainty that in turning to God, they will be answered, helped, cleared of their sins and saved. This in itself echoes the postures of *taḥanun*, from abject prostration before God (however modified by later halakhic concerns) to an upright posture, sitting or standing, for at least this cento that expresses confidence in God's ability and willingness to effect solutions to human weaknesses.

Conclusions

The first line of this cento may be taken as representative of the process of the emergence of *taḥanun*. Requesting one's personal needs requires using one's own words. But when the community turns to its leadership and cries "We do not know what to do!" somehow words suitable for recitation by all emerge. The earliest documentable stage of *taḥanun*, then, presents us with a liturgy that is without question penitential in nature. In its emergence as a quasi-communal prayer with a structure and some degree of fixity in its texts, it moves away from being a venue in which "one requests one's [personal] needs" to being a venue that expresses human humility, penitence, and reliance on God's mercy, loving-kindness, and, above all, willingness to forgive human weakness. Expansions of *taḥanun* in the various rites largely continue this theme, and many segments,

57. See my "Early Medieval Celebrations of Torah," 102.

though not all, are constructed in whole or in part as centos. The resultant structures of this element in the various rites have little direct connection with the relative simplicity of our genizah exemplars, to the point that their penitential nature, especially their confessional elements, can be obscured by the wash of words asking for God's forgiveness and salvation. Our examination here, though, allows us to retrieve and lift up the centrality of *taḥanun*'s penitential elements, elements whose prominence may well be a result of the entrance of the generally supplicatory free prayer into the public realm.

Table 2: Taḥanun in the Babylonian Rite[58]

	סדור רב סעדיה גאון עמ' כד תפילת השחר ליחיד	**The Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon, p. 24, Morning Prayers of the Individual**[59]
	ואחרי השמונה עשרה בזמן הרגיל, שאיננו שבת ולא חודש ולא חנוכה ולא מועד, צריך המאמין לפול על פניו, ותאור נפילת אפים: מניח את ברכו השמאלית על הארץ כדרכו כשהוא יושב ומקפל את ברכו הימנית עליה כדרכו כשהוא כורע ויהא חצי כורע חצי יושב, ואומר:[60]	**And after the Amidah at its regular time, when it is neither Shabbat nor the New Moon nor Hanukkah nor a festival, the faithful person needs to fall on his face, and the description of falling on the nostrils [is as follows]: One places one's left knee on the ground as one does when sitting, and folds one's right knee on it as one does when kneeling, so that one is half kneeling and half sitting. Then one says:**
I.	רחום וחנון חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו	You who are merciful and compassionate, we have sinned before You; have mercy on us.
	נושא עון ועובר על פשע חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו	You who forgive sin and overlook transgression, we have sinned before You; have mercy on us.
	עשה למען שמך הגדול הגבור והנורא שיתקדש בעולם כלו ורחם עלינו	Act for the sake of Your great, mighty, and awesome Name, that it may be sanctified in all the world; and have mercy on us
	וכפר על חטאתינו למען שמך	and grant atonement for our sins for the sake of Your name.

58. The list of manuscripts referred to appears at the end of the table. In the cells noting variants, 'ח means חסר, that this element is lacking in the manuscript(s) listed; 'נ means נוסף, that the element listed has been added in the manuscripts identified there.

59. See too Saadia's instructions on p. 39. The text of the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. Goldschmidt) has fairly minimal correspondence with this text. As the only genizah manuscript considered here that is ascribed to it contains only those parts that correspond, that is, "Our Father our King" and the cento, we are not in a position to draw any conclusions about it.

60. Here, and throughout, I have provided the modern Hebrew translation of Saadia's Arabic instructions found in the printed edition of the text.

Alternative Versions of this *Seliḥah*[61]

Saadia, B4, B5, B7, B9, B10, B11, B12, B14, B15: You who are merciful and compassionate . . .	רחום וחנון חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B4: The merciful One . . .	הרחמן חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B9, B10, B12, B14: Father of mercy . . .	אב הרחמן חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B7, B12: Merciful One, full of mercies . . . B10: Merciful One of mercies . . .	רחמן מלא רחמים חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו רחמן רחמים חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B7: You who are full of many mercies . . . B11: You who are full of mercies . . .	מלא רחמים רבים חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו מלא רחמים חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B7, B9, B12: You who are full of merits . . .	מלא זכיות חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B4: God of forgiveness . . . B5: God of forgiveness, Creator of the world through the characteristic of mercy . . .	אלוה הסליחות חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו אלוה הסליחות בורא עולם במדת רחמים ח'ט לפנ' רח' עלי'
B11: Master of forgiveness . . .	אדון הסליחות חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B11: You who are compassionate and greatly forgiving . . .	חנון ומרבה לסלוח חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B11: You who are good and upright . . .	טוב וישר חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B7, B9, B12: You who are patient and of great loving-kindness . . .	ארך אפים ורב חסד חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
Saadia, B7, B9, B12 (without the last two words): You who forgive sin and overlook transgression . . .	נושא עון ועובר על פשע חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B4, B5: You who are patient and of great loving-kindness . . .	ארך אפים ורב חסד חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B11: You who are patient and of lots of loving-kindness . . .	ארך אפים וגדול חסד חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B7: You who are compassionate [ ] . . .	חנון [ ] חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו

B14 (following אב הרחמין*—i.e., only a few letters are missing from the acrostic):*

61. This section retains the order of the lines in the various manuscripts. This has necessitated the occasional repetition of individual lines in our table. Lines that seem to be variants of each other also appear together to the extent possible.

Alternative Versions of this *Seliḥah* (*cont.*)

Creator of creatures . . .	בורא בריות חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
Munificent in advice . . .	גדול העצה חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You who speak and it comes to be . . .	דובר ומקים חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You for whom glory(?) [is Your] appropriate garment (?) . . .	הוד (?) מלבוש (?) ונאה חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
[ ]	[ ]
Pure and upright . . .	זך וישר חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You who lives and exists forever . . .	חי וקים חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You who are Good and does good . . .	טוב ומטיב חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You who know [ ] . . .	יודע [ ] חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You who include (?) . . .	כולל (?) [ ]
You who wears justice and [ ] . . .	לובש צדק ות[ ]
High and exalted . . .	רם ונשא חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
Guardian of those who love him . . .	שומר אוהביו חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You who are perfect and upright . . .	תם וישר חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
B13 (manuscript begins in the middle of this composition with the last four letters of an acrostic—including an extra "resh" line):	
Near to all who call Him in truth . . .	קרוב לקוראיו באמת חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
You who see everything but who is not seen, . . .	רואה הכל והוא לא יראה חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
Healer of the sick . . .	רופא חולים חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
Guardian of the covenant . . .	שומר הברית חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
Whose deeds are perfect . . .	תמים פעלו חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו
Do this for the sake of Your great, mighty and awesome Name, that it might be sanctified in the entire world, and have mercy on us and atone for our sins for the sake of Your name.	עשה למען שמך הגדול הגבור והנורא שיתקדש בעולם כלו ורחם עלינו וכפר על חטאתינו למען שמך
Saadia, B4, B7 (fragmentary); B9 (variants), B12 (variants), B13 (fragmentary and possibly variants) *B5, B8, B10, B11, B14 omits* *B3 (fragmentary) apparently lacks this text and provides an alternative.*	עשה . . . **שמך]** B10 B8 B5 ח'. **שיתקדש** . . . B14 B11 **שמך]** B9 שיתגדל ויתקדש שמך בעולם רחם עלינו. **כלו ורחם]** B12 רחם.

Saadia's Text—Resumed

אבל חטאנו עוינו הרשענו פשענו ומרדנו וסרנו ממצותיך וממשפטיך הטובים ולא שוה לנו ואתה צדיק על כל הבא עלינו כי אמת עשית ואנחנו הרשענו.

II. A. But "we have sinned, transgressed, committed iniquities, done evil, rebelled, and turned from Your commandments, and Your good laws" (Dan 9:5) have meant nothing to us—while "Surely You are in the right about all that has come upon us, for You have acted faithfully and we have been wicked" (Neh 9:33).

אבל . . . הרשענו] B10 B9 B7 B5 ח'. B14 B11 חטאנו B10 B9 B5 צורינו סלח לנו יוצרינו נ'. B15 B3 הכל נאמר בגוף ראשון יחיד. **אבל . . . מרדנו]** B8 . . . אנחנו ולא חטאנו אבל אנחנו חטאנו עם (א)בותינו העוינו והרשענו. B12 אבל אנחנו חטאנו עוינו פשענו. **הטובים]** B12 ח'.
ואנחנו הרשענו] B8 נ' לך לבדך חטאתי והרע בעיניך עשיתי למען תצדק בדברך תזכה בשפטיך. B13 נ' חטאתי עויתי פשעתי סרתי ממצוותיך וממשפטיך הטובים ולא שוה לי.

B3, B15 (fragmentary) in the first person singular.
B4 (fragmentary) has an alternative text.
B5, B9, B10 alternative text, confession of Rite of Land of Israel.
B7, B11, B14 omits
B8 adjusts the beginning to cohere with Ps 106:6 instead of with Dan 9:5: "We have sinned like our ancestors, we have gone astray, done evil," and adds at the end Ps 51:6: "Against You alone have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight; so You are just in Your sentence, and right in Your judgment."[62]
B13 ends with Neh 9:33. The beginning is fragmentary but seems to present a more specific confession, including of theft and violence. After this, it cites Dan 9:5, but in the singular.
B12 recto right ends with צדיק על כל. *The continuation is missing.*

62. Note that the first verse speaks in the first person plural and the second in the singular. This manuscript adheres to the precise language of the verses.

Saadia's Text—Resumed

עכשו באתי ועמדתי על פתחיך.	II. B.	And now, I have come and I stand at Your gates.
יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו שתפתח לי שערי רחמים ושערי תשובה ואחזור בתשובה שלימה לפניך תשובה שאתה רוצה בה תשובה שאתה חפץ בה תשובה שתמחול ותסלח לכל עונותי בשבילה.		May it be acceptable before You, Eternal our God, to open for me the gates of mercy and the gates of repentance, and I will return in perfect repentance to You, a repentance that You desire, a repentance that You cherish, a repentance that, for its sake, You will pardon and forgive all my sins.
ועכשו ... בשבילה] B7 B5 B4 ח'. B15 B14 B11 B10 B9 **ועכשו ... פתחיך]** B8 ח'. B13 ועכשיו באתי לפניך ועמדתי על פתחך. **אלהינו]** B8 אלהי ואלהי אבותי שתקבל תפלתי ותענה בשתי. B13 אלהי. **שתפתח לי . . . ואחזור]** B8 ותפתח לי שערי רצון ורחמים שערי תורה ויראה שערי פרנסה וכלכלה שערי מחילה וסליחה ותקבליני. B13 שתפתח לי שערי רחמים שערי סליחה שערי מחילה שערי פרנסה שערי כלכלה שערי תשובה. **ואחזור בתשובה שלימה לפניך]** B13 ח'. **תשובה שאתה חפץ . . . בשבילה]** B8 ח'.		*B3 (fragmentary) apparently lacks this text and provides an alternative:* And now I have come before You and stood at Your gate . . . *B4 (fragmentary); B5, B7, B9, B10, B11, B14, B15 omits.* *B8 has significant variants—including another mention of ancestors, a more expansive listing of gates, and less human initiative in the process. B13 has some similar variants. Its conclusion is fragmentary and unreadable, but is likely a small elaboration on Saadia's text.*
אבינו מלכנו אלהינו חננו ועננו אין בנו מעשים עשה עמנו למען שמך צדקה.	II. C.	Our Father, our King, our God, be compassionate to us and answer us. We have no [worthy] deeds; act with us with righteousness for the sake of Your Name.

Saadia's Text—Resumed

אבינו] B5 וירפע ראסה ויקול נ'.
B7 B11 B13 תם יגלס ויקול נ'.
אלהינו] B4 B5 B11 B13 B14
נ'. B15 B17
למען שמך צדקה] B3 צדקה
והושיענו למען [ ]. B17 צדקה
והושינו למען שמך. 6B 4B צדקה
וחסד [ ]. B8 צדקה וחסד. B15
צדקה וחסד [ ]שיענו. B13
צדקה למען שמך והושיענו. B14
צדקה [ ].

Many manuscripts instruct a change in posture before this segment. B4 has illegible instructions. B5 precedes this line with instructions in Judeo-Arabic to lift one's head (וירפע ראסה)[63] *as does B14. B7, B11, and B13 direct the worshiper to sit up and recite (תם יגלס ויקול). B8 indicates that one should stand up, but at the end of this segment (ת'ם יקאד מן לסגוד ויקול). B17 begins after these instructions, but the Goldschmidt text of the* Seder Rav Amram Gaon *includes Hebrew instructions that the precentor should now stand.*

B17's text for this segment represents the majority of Goldschmidt's manuscripts. B9, B10, B11 omit this segment entirely. Note that the majority do not include "our God," and that there is no unity as to the precise wording of the concluding phrase.

עמ' כה

p. 25

אח"כ הוא יושב ואומר

III. Cento[64]

Then he sits up and recites:

1. ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה כי עליך עינינו

1. And we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You. (2 Chr 20:12b)

2. זכור רחמיך ה' וחסדיך כי מעולם המה

2. O Eternal, be mindful of your compassion and Your faithfulness. (Ps 25:6)

3. אל תזכר לנו עונות ראשונים מהר יקדמונו רחמיך כי דלונו מאד

3. Do not hold our former iniquities against us; let Your compassion come swiftly toward us, for we have sunk very low. (Ps 79:8)

63. My thanks to Dr. Shari Lowin of Stonehill College and Ina Cohen of the Jewish Theological Seminary Library for their help in reading and translating this phrase.

64. The verse numbers are provided here for reference. They are not in the original text.

Saadia's Text—Resumed

4. קומה עזרתה לנו ופדנו למען חסדך	4. Arise and help us, redeem us, as befits Your faithfulness. (Ps 44:27)
5. יהי חסדך ה' עלינו כאשר יחלנו לך	5. May we enjoy, O Eternal, Your faithful care, as we have put our hope in You. (Ps 33:22)
6. אם עונות תשמר יה יי מי יעמוד	6. If You, God, keep account of sins, O Eternal, who will survive?
7. כי עמך הסליחה למען תורא	7. Yours is the power to forgive, so that You may be held in awe. (Ps 130:3–4)
8. יי הושיע המלך יעננו ביום קראינו	8. O Eternal, save us! May the King answer us when we call. (Ps 20:10)
9. כי הוא ידע יצרנו זכור כי עפר אנחנו	9. For He knows how we are formed, He is mindful that we are dust. (Ps 103:14)
10. עזרנו אלהי ישענו על דבר כבוד שמך והצילנו וכפר על חטאתינו למען שמך	10. Help us, O God, our deliverer, for the sake of the glory of Your name. Save us and forgive our sin for the sake of Your name. (Ps 79:9)

Precisely this sequence of verses appears in: B2; B3; B8; B10; in B1[65] *and B17 (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*), the instructions are for the precentor to recite this verse by verse and the congregation to repeat after him; B4 is missing after v. 9; B5 is missing from the middle of v. 8; B6 is missing the first 2.5 verses; in B7, the third verse is repeated in modified form and replaces the fourth verse; B9 lacks v. 8; B11 is missing after v. 6; in B12 recto left resumes with v. 5. B13 provides only the first word at the bottom of the page. B14 presents a sequence more characteristic of later rites: vv. 1, 2, 3, Ps 123:3, 8, 9. B15 lacks this segment. B16 begins at the end of v. 7.*[66]

65. This manuscript begins here.

66. A second hand has added the end of Hab 3:2 between the lines.

Saadia's Text—Resumed

B17 and Goldschmidt's Amram *present a unique version: 1, 2, 5 (not in B17 or Goldschmidt's 16th c. JTS ms), 3, a non-biblical insert:* עשה למען שמך הגדול והגבור והנורא שנקרא עלינו *(Act for the sake of Your great, mighty and awesome Name by which we are called), Ps 123:3, Hab 3:2 end,*[67] *8, 9,*[68] 10.

ומוסיף ואומר

And he adds and says:

הוא רחום יכפר עון ולא ישחית וג'

But He, being merciful, will forgive iniquity and will not destroy (Ps 78:38a), etc.

יי הושיעה וג'

O Eternal, save us! (Ps 20:10), etc.

אשרי יושבי ביתך וג'

Happy are those who sit in Your house (Ps 84:5), etc.

אשרי העם שככה לו וג'

Happy is the people for whom this is the case (Ps 144:15), etc.

תהלה לדוד ארוממך אלהי המלך ואברכה שמך לעולם ועד בכל יום אברכך עד סוף המזמור

A Psalm of praise of David. I will extol You, my God and King, and I will bless Your Name for ever and ever. Every day I will bless You—until the end of the psalm (Ps 145).

עמ' כו תפלת מנחה ליחיד

p. 26, *Minḥah* (afternoon service) for the individual

. . . עד ה' צורי וגואלי, ונופל עך פניו ואומר

. . . until the conclusion of the Amidah, then he falls on his face and says:

רחום וחנון,

"Merciful and compassionate"

ויושב ואומר

Then he sits and says:

ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה עד וכפר על חטאתינו למען שמך

"And we do not know what to do" through "and forgive our sin for the sake of Your name."

כדרך שפרשנו בתפלת שחרית

As we explained it in the morning service.

67. Goldschmidt's manuscript from the British Museum (fourteenth–fifteenth century) adds here another liturgical elaboration, ברוגז רחמים תזכור ("In anger, remember mercy"). More elaborate versions along these lines appear in our contemporary Sefardi-influenced rites.

68. Not in Goldschmidt's JTS manuscript. The only other complete text considered

List of Manuscripts and Editions Consulted: Babylonian Rite Versions

B1: Ms. JTS ENA 2017.8, recto, begins with the cento (III).
B2: Ms. JTS ENA 964.9, badly damaged. 8 recto–9 recto is the *viddui* text (I), followed by II.C. and then the cento (III).
B3: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 122.43, badly damaged. Recto has conclusion of Amidah, followed by the beginning of the *viddui* (I). Verso completes the *viddui*, perhaps with just the lead words of the acrostic, followed by II and III.
B4: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 150.44, folded leaf. I begins on verso right and continues on verso left with II (badly damaged). The recto right continues with II.C. and the cento (III).
B5: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 151.76, single folded leaf, pages not continuous. Verso left begins with I and II, and ends with the first word of the cento (III), which appears on the recto right.
B6: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 152.215 begins in the middle of the third verse of the cento (III).
B7: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 153.158, single folded sheet, verso right is end of Amidah, followed by I and II on the verso left. The cento (III) begins on the top line of the recto right.
B8: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 153.9, single folded sheet, recto left has unusual version of II, followed by III.
B9: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 155.46, two folded sheets. I begins on p. 1b. The cento (III) begins p. 2a. A page may be missing between these.
B10: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 196.19, single sheet, I begins halfway down recto, II consists one line, the confession more typical of the rite of the Land of Israel, and III continues onto the verso.
B11: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 230.77, single sheet, recto begins after beginning of I, II consists only of II.C., followed by the first words of the cento (III)—which continues on the verso through the sixth verse.
B12: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 271.7, single folded sheet, with recto belonging inside the fold. I begins on the recto right, continuing through II.A. The recto left is not continuous, so at least one leaf of the quire is missing. It picks up with the fifth verse of the cento (III) through the end.
B13: Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 151.99, single folded page. Verso left begins in middle of I, continues on recto right with II and the first word of the cento (III).
B14: Ms. Cambridge T-S 10 H 1.2, single folded page, with recto belonging inside the fold. Recto right begins with I in an extended version. Its conclusion and II may be on a missing page. Recto left begins with II.C., followed by the cento (III) in a version more similar to the European rites.
B15: Ms. Cincinnati HUC 1246, three folded sheets, I begins on p. 4b, continuing with II on p. 5a. P. 5b includes instructions to recite III, but provides no text.
B16: Ms. Cincinnati HUC 1235, folded sheet with inner pages of quire missing, Recto right begins in middle of cento.
B17: Ms. Cambridge T-S 10 H 1.6, single page, ascribed to the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, beginning with II.C.

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here that omits this verse is Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 102.102, which is otherwise not similar to Amram's text. See the list of manuscripts below.

A few manuscripts seem to belong to this family of texts, but are either very fragmentary or present substantial variations, making them difficult to place:

- Ms. Cambridge T-S AS 102.25 presents only vv. 8–10 of the cento.
- Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 102.102. The relevant part of this text begins with the second half of an acrostic reminiscent of those found in parts of the elaborations on "You who are merciful and compassionate." However, there is no indication that these phrases precede "we have sinned against You, have mercy on us." This is followed by six penitential lines beginning הרחמן (Merciful One), and then the statement characteristic of the rite of the Land of Israel, but found in three other Babylonian-rite manuscripts: "We have sinned, O our Rock; forgive us, O our Creator." Then, this rite calls for the immediate recitation of the Babylonian "Our Father, our King" (with the more expansive ending, עשה עמנו צדקה וחסד והושיענו). The cento follows immediately, missing v. 8, then adding the end of Hab 3:2, and concluding immediately with v. 10—a version for which I have found no parallels.
- Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 156.58. On the inside of the folded leaf, we find first, largely illegible, some elaboration on "You who are merciful and compassionate," followed by Neh 9:33 and "Our Father our King" (ending עשה עמנו צדקה והושיענו), and then a very short cento that skips from v. 3 to the end of Hab 3:2 to vv. 9–10.
- Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 122.107. The relevant part of this manuscript begins with the end of "Our Father our King" (ending עשה עמנו צ[דק]ה למען שמך גדול [ ] והושיענו), and then a cento much more similar to those of the later rites, particularly those influenced by Sefardi practices, consisting of vv. 1, 2, 5, 3; Ps 124:8; Hab 3:2?; 8, 9, 10.

Table 3: *Taḥanun* in the Rite of the Land of Israel

Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 195.47[69]		
recto		
זכור לעבדיך לאברהם	I.[70]	Remember Your servants, Abraham
verso		
ליצחק וליעקב אל תפ[ן א]ל קשינו ואל רשעינו ואל חטאתינו.		Isaac and Jacob and do not [heed] our stubbornness and our evil deeds and our sins. (Deut 9:27 adjusted to context)
שוב מחרון אפך והנחם על הרעה לעמך		Turn from Your blazing anger and renounce the plan to punish Your people. (Exod 32:12b)

69. Published with permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

70. Preceding this in our main manuscript, as well as those published by Schechter and Mann, is the prayer begining with Neh 9:6–8a that commonly concludes the Amidah in the rite of the Land of Israel. On this pasage, see Ezra Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer and Prayer Rituals as Portrayed in the Geniza Documents* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 89-92.

והדר ממנו מכת המות כי כן דרכך עושה חנם(?) בכל דור ודור

And keep (?) the death blow from us, for this is Your *modus operandi* without recompense (?) in every generation.

חוסה יי על ישראל עמך ואל תתן נחלתך לחרפה למשל בם גוים למה יאמרו בעמים איה אלהיהם

Oh Eternal spare Your people Israel,[71] let not Your possession become a mockery, to be taunted by nations. Let not the peoples say, "Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17b)

זכור. . . אלהיהם] ש מ ח'.

We have two exemplars of this section of this rite, both mixtures of verse citations, lightly rewritten verses, and rabbinic prayer language, both close to a cento in form, but with no common language between them. Our main text's version is obviously penitential and recalls Moses' desperate but successful conversation with God following the creation of the Golden Calf. 1ק, a florilegium of verses containing the words "The Eternal alone is God," reminds the community of their utter dependence on God and the meaning of their prostration before Him (evoked in the third verse). The beginning is missing. A translation follows here:

71. The original biblical verse does not specify Israel here, though it is obvious from the context.

[. . .] יי אלהינו יומם ולילה לעשות משפט [עב]דו ומשפט עמו ישראל למען דעת [כל] עמי הארץ כי יי הוא האלהים אין [ע]וד	I. alternative text (1ק)	[And may these words of mine, which I have offered in supplication before the Eternal, be close to] the Eternal God day and night, that He may provide for his servant for His people Israel,[72] to the end that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Eternal alone is God, there is no other. (1 Kgs 8:59–60)
וידעת היום והשבות אל לבביך [כ]י יי הוא האלהים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד		Know therefore this day and keep in mind that the Eternal alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other. (Deut 4:39)
וירא כל העם ויפלו על פניהם ויאמרו יי הוא האלהים		When they saw this, all the people flung themselves on their faces and cried out: The Eternal alone is God.[73] (1 Kgs 18:39)
יי אלהים אמת [הו]א אלהים חיים ומלך עולם מקצפו תרעש הארץ ולא יכילו גוים זעמו		The Eternal is truly God; He is a living God, the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and nations cannot endure his rage. (Isa 10:10)
רחום וחנון חטאנו לפניך רחם עלינו	II.	Merciful and Compassionate One, we have sinned before You, have mercy on us.
רחום . . . עלינו] ש מ ק1 ח'		*This line is characteristic of the Babylonian rite at this point. It does not appear in the previously printed manuscripts from the Land of Israel. It and the following line both combine confession and a plea for forgiveness.*
חטאנו צורינו סלח לנו יוצרינו:		We have sinned, O our Rock; forgive us, O our Creator.

72. The conclusion of this verse is missing: "according to each day's needs."
73. The repetition of this cry is missing here.

ש תם יסגד ויקול נ'. ק1 ח' ונ' ויסגד ויקול. מ ח'

Schechter's text and ק1 include the instruction to bow down at this point.

אל רחום שמך
אל חנון שמך
אל ארך אפים שמך
מלא רחמים שמך
יי עשה עמנו צדקה למען שמך

God of mercy is Your name.
God of compassion is Your name.
God of patience is Your name
Full of mercy is Your name
Eternal, deal justly with us for the sake of Your name

רחם עלינו יי והושיענו למען שמך הגדול:

Have mercy on us, Eternal, and save us for the sake of your great Name.

אל רחום . . . למען שמך הגדול] ש ח' ובמקומו: תם יסל רבוה פימא יחתאג אליה. ק1 אל רחום שמך [ ] אל חנון שמך וג'.
אל ארך אפים] מ ארך אפים.
צדקה למען שמך] מ למען שמך. א צדקה למענך.
רחם] מ על עירך ועל עמך כרוב רחמיך הרבים רחם. א רחם על עירך ועל . . .[75] ועל מקדשך ברחמיך הרבים רחם
יי] א ח'
הגדול] מ ח'. א הגדול אל רחום שמך וגו'

At this point, Schechter's manuscript, instead of this poetic text, instructs that one should "request his Lord (God) concerning what he has need of."[74] *However, this poetic text expresses only general petitions for divine mercy and justice.*
Assaf's manuscript starts with the second line of this poem.
ק1 concludes the second line with "etc." and goes directly to the next segment.

III. **Cento**[76]

1. ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה כי עליך עינינו

1. And we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You. (2 Chr 20:12b)

2. זכור רחמיך ה' וחסדיך כי מעולם המה

2. O Eternal, be mindful of your compassion and Your faithfulness. (Ps 25:6)

3. אל תזכר לנו עונות ראשונים מהר יקדמונו רחמיך כי דלונו מאד

3. Do not hold our former iniquities against us; let Your compassion come swiftly toward us, for we have sunk very low. (Ps 79:8)

4. קומה עזרתה לנו ופדנו למען חסדך

4. Arise and help us, redeem us, as befits Your faithfulness. (Ps 44:27)

74. Translation according to Mann, 299 (409).

75. The ellipsis is in Assaf's publication. Presumably this represents text that he could not decipher.

76. Verse numbers here, added for the sake of reference only, refer to the order of the verses in the fuller text of Saadia in table 2.

5. יהי חסדך ה' עלינו כאשר יחלנו לך

8. יי הושיע המלך יעננו ביום קראינו

*. יהי שם יי מבורך מעתה ועד עולם

9. כי הוא ידע יצרנו זכור כי עפר אנחנו

11. והוא רחום יכפר עון ולא ישחית

5. May we enjoy, O Eternal, Your faithful care, as we have put our hope in You. (Ps 33:22)

8. O Eternal, save us! May the King answer us when we call. (Ps 20:10)

*. Let the name of the Eternal be blessed now and forever! (Ps 113:2)

9. For He knows how we are formed, He is mindful that we are dust. (Ps 103:14)

11. But He, being merciful, will forgive iniquity and will not destroy. (Ps 78:38a)

ואנחנו . . . ישחית] ש תם לקרא פואסיק. מ ח'

ואנחנו] ק1 נ' ויגלס ויקול

קומה . . . חסדך] ק1 כתוב בין השורות ביד המקורי

יי הושיע] ק1 נ' לפניו: ברגז רחם תזכור

והוא רחום . . .] א ק1 ח'.

Schechter's manuscript merely instructs that a number of verses are read at this point. Mann's manuscript skips this entirely.

Assaf's text is the only text examined that is precisely identical to Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 195.47 for this cento, with the exception of the last verse. That verse is also missing in ק1. Where the final verse appears in other genizah fragments of taḥanun, it indicates the beginning of the next element of the service. ק1 includes an additional partial verse before v.8: Hab 3:2 end, "Though angry, may you remember compassion." This is very common in post-genizah rites (including all the contemporary rites in Table 1). It does appear in a few other genizah manuscripts.

List of Manuscripts and Published Texts Consulted, Rite of the Land of Israel

Published texts, listed in the order of their publication:

- ש Solomon Schechter, "Geniza Specimens," *JQR* o.s. 10 (1898): 657–58, identified as Ms. Cambridge K27.33.
- מ Jacob Mann, "Geniza Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service," *HUCA* 2 (1925): 308, identified there as Ms. Cambridge Add. 3160.6.
- א Simcha Assaf, "From the Order of Prayers in the Land of Israel" [Hebrew], in *Sefer Dinaburg* (ed. Yitzhak Baer et al.; Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1949), 123, identified there as Ms. Antonin 995, 1a, which begins in the middle of our text.

Additional unpublished genizah manuscripts include the following:[74]

- Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 195.47 = the main text of this table, single sheet, I begins on the recto, continuing to the verso, followed by II and III.
- 1ק Ms. Cambridge T-S H.8.87, fragmentary, single sheet. Recto is Arabic instructions, verso contains a different cento for I, a one-line version of II, followed by III in a form similar to our base text.

77. Ms. Cambridge T-S NS 195.3 may belong here, but it contains elements not encountered in the other manuscripts. The relevant portion is contained on the second page, recto and verso, of a folded sheet. It does not continue from the other half of the sheet. It begins with two *haraḥaman* (the merciful One) petitions, to keep drought away. The second runs into a single pair of the characteristic "God of Mercy is Your Name, God of Compassion is Your Name," asking that this stand when we stand before God in judgment. In this rite, this elaboration usually follows the confessional formula. Following this is a litany: Do this for the sake of Your Name, . . . for the sake of Your covenant, etc., a formula familiar from *seliḥot*. Following this is the line of confession typical of this rite, "We have sinned, O our Rock. . .", but this leads directly into Neh 9:33b, and then "Our Father our King," an element we otherwise encounter only in the Babylonian texts. Only the beginning of the cento is preserved: the first two verses are standard; the third may be unusual but has been crossed out.

The Penitential Part of the Amidah and Personal Redemption

Reuven Kimelman

Since about the third century C.E. the eighteen/nineteen blessings of the Amidah have been understood as comprising three sections:[1] the first three, the intermediate twelve/thirteen, and the final three. The penitential part of the Amidah, blessings 4–7, appears in the opening unit of the intermediate blessings. The topics of the intermediate unit are as follows:

4. knowledge
5. return to God (= repentance)
6. forgiveness
7. deliverance
8. healing
9. year of (agricultural) prosperity
10. ingathering of the exiles
11. restoration of proper judges/leaders
12. destruction of the wicked
13. support of the righteous
14. rebuilding of Jerusalem
15. restoration of the Davidic line (the Palestinian rite combines 14 and 15)
16. acceptance of prayer.

The unit of blessings 4–7 follows much of the accepted definition of penitential prayer insofar as it constitutes a collective prayer to God in biblically allusive language which includes confession of sins and petitions for forgiveness. In Amidah studies the only question would be whether the unit ends with blessing 6 and its subject of forgiveness or with blessing 7 and its subject of redemption. If the definition of penitential prayer includes a final resolution in some form of salvation, as it sometimes occurs at Qumran,[2] then blessing 7 completes the penitential unit. Still, there is disagreement about whether blessing 7 deals with

1. *B. Ber.* 34a; *t. Ber.* 3:12; and see Reuven Kimelman, "The Literary Structure of the Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," in *The Echoes of Many Texts*: *Reflections on Jewish and Christian Traditions. Essays in Honor of Lou H. Silberman* (ed. William G. Dever and J. Edward Wright; BJS 313; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 176.

2. For petitions for knowledge, repentance, and forgiveness that occur as part of pleas for

individual redemption or collective redemption. Those who argue that its subject is the collective redemption of the people of Israel rely on its peroration where God is blessed as "Redeemer of Israel." Those who argue that the subject is the redemption of the individual rely on its location in the Amidah contending that, were the subject collective, it would have been located with the collective blessings on redemption from 10 to 15.

There is much more to be said for understanding the deliverance of blessing 7 as individual. First, its biblical roots reinforce the individual dimension. According to Ps 103:3–4, among the reasons for "blessing the Lord for all His benefits" are His forgiving iniquity, healing diseases, and redeeming life from the pit. These themes correspond respectively to blessings 6, 8, and 7.[3] According to the Talmud, this would have been the order were it not for the verse, "His heart will understand, repent, and be healed" (Isa 6:10), implying that in the wake of understanding (blessing 4) and repentance (blessing 5) comes healing—the healing of forgiveness.[4] It is this spiritual healing that constitutes the redemption of blessing 7.[5] The initial step of this process is indicated by the psalmist: "O Lord, have mercy on me, heal my soul/self, for I have sinned against You" (Ps 41:5).[6] The

deliverance, see Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (STDJ 27; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 70–73.

3. Following Aharon Mirsky, "The Origin of the Eighteen Benedictions of the Daily Prayer," in *Ha'Piyut: The Development of Post Biblical Poetry in Eretz Israel and the Diaspora* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 18–29. *B. Yoma* 86a contains several passages that make explicit the connections among repentance, recovery, and redemption.

4. רפואה דסליחה (*b. Meg.* 17b; *y. Ber.* 2:4, 4d); see *Siddur Ha-Meyuḥas La-RABaN* (*Genuzot* 3; ed. M. Hershler; Jerusalem: Shalem, 1991), 66f. The association of forgiveness with healing is a commonplace. In fact, the word for forgiveness, סליחה, is related to the Akkadian word for "asperse," *salahu*, a term that doubles for healing; see Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 396. Hosea (6:1–2; 14:5) associates repenting with healing and reviving as does Isaiah (57:15, 18).

5. Parallel to the פדות נפשנו that precedes the second cup in the Passover *Haggadah*. Similarly, a prayer of the Qumran *Thanksgiving Scroll* begins (1QH^a 11:19–22): אודכה אדוני כי פדיתה נפשי משחת . . . ("I give You thanks, O Lord, because You have redeemed my soul from the pit . . .") and then goes on to spell out the redemption of the soul. The biblical basis of the expression is ונפשי אשר פדית (Ps 71:23). An expression of similar valence may be שמח נפשנו בישועתך followed by טהר לבנו לעבדך באמת of the Sabbath liturgy (*Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* [ed. Israel Davidson et al.; Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1970], 112; Moses Maimonides, *Liturgy*, in *On Jewish Liturgy: Essays on Prayer and Religious Poetry* [Hebrew; ed. E. Daniel Goldschmidt; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1980], 205, line 31). Accordingly, blessing 7 of the Amidah has been called גאולת נפשו (the redemption of one's soul); see David Abudraham, *Tehillah Le-David* (ed. M. Baron; Jerusalem: Or Ha-Sefer, 2001), 240.

6. One of the *Festival Prayers* from Qumran (4Q509 12 i + 13) also applies the metaphor of healing to sin, and *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* explains ורפא לו by יסלח לו (7, line 5). Also the third-century Palestinian Origen associates healing and forgiveness in his discussion of the

next step is spelled out in *The Prayer of Manasseh*: "You, O Lord . . . In the multitude of Your mercies appointed repentance as the salvation for sinners."[7] Or, as Josephus says at about the time when the order of the Amidah was set: "Yet a way of salvation (*soterias hodos*) is still left to you if you will follow it, and the Deity is easily reconciled to those who confess and repent" (*J.W.* 5.415).

Second, the sequence of the blessings argues for the individual orientation of blessing 7. Preceded by a blessing on forgiveness and succeeded by one on healing, the intervening deliverance theme tends toward a personal spiritual deliverance. The understanding of deliverance as personal salvation is seconded by a midrash that correlates the eighteen benedictions and the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10), where "I rejoice in Your salvation" (2:1) is linked with blessing 7.[8]

Third, the link between redemption and forgiveness is tightened in a genizah version of blessing 6. This version juxtaposes a verse on redemption (Ps 34:23) with a reworked one on forgiveness (1 Kgs 8:34–36). The first two strophes state: "The Lord redeems the soul of His servants/and forgives the sin of His beloved."[9] The linkage between personal salvation/atonement and forgiveness is also behind the midrashic understanding that applies the verse "The Lord is . . . my salvation" (Ps 27:1) to "the Day of Atonement when He saves us and forgives us all our sins."[10]

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order of prayer: "After thankgiving it seems to me that he ought to blame himself bitterly before God for his own sins and then ask, first, for healing that he may be delivered from the habit that brings him to sin and, second, for forgiveness of the sins that have been committed": (*On Prayer* 33.1, 6, in Rowan Greer, *Origen* [New York: Paulist Press, 1979], 169).

7. James H. Charlesworth, "Prayer of Manasseh," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983, 1985), 2:636. The *Prayer of Manasseh* may go back as early as the first century C.E. Its view of Manasseh's repentance as a symbol of hope for sinners is paralleled in Qumran (see two previous notes) and rabbinic sources (see Eileen Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection* [HSS 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986], 160–62; and Reimund Leicht, "A Newly Discovered Hebrew Version of the Apocryphal 'Prayer of Manasseh,'" *JSQ* 3 [1996]: 367). For the Qumran fragment of a different "prayer of Manasseh," see ibid., 361 n. 3.

8. *Yalqut Shim'oni al ha-Torah le Rabbenu Shim'on ha-Darshan* 2:80 (ed. D. Hyman et al.; 9 vols.; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1973–91, *Nevi'im Rishonim*, 186 with n. 30).

9. 1. פודה ה' נפש עבדיו
2. וסולח לחטאת ידידיו
3. בא"י המרבה לסלח

See Arthur Marmorstein, "Mitteilungen zur Geschichte und Literatur aus der Geniza," *MGWJ* 69 (1925): 38f.; and idem, "The Attitude of the Jews Towards Early Christianity," *Expositor* 49 (1923): 386. The synonymy of פודה and סולח is apparent in two parallel midrashic texts where one states ואושיעם ואפדם מעונות (*Midrash Tanḥuma*, end of *Va-Yera*) while the other states ואני סולח לעונותיהם (*Midrash Tanḥuma*, ed. S. Buber, end of *Va-Yera*).

10. *Midrash Ps*. 27:4. Compare the explanation of the apothegm of Epicurus, "The knowl-

Finally, and most conclusively, the talmudic abridgment of the Amidah, the *Havinenu*, links forgiveness with deliverance from sin by condensing blessings 6 and 7 into the single phrase "forgive us in order that we may be delivered."[11] The fact that blessings 6 and 7 are conflated into one,[12] whereas every other blessing is allotted its own phrase, distinctly links forgiveness with redemption. The *Havinenu*, which serves as the earliest commentary on the Amidah, makes clear that rather than starting a new unit, blessing 7 caps blessing 6 by pointing to the redemption that is spawned by forgiveness in the belief that God "will redeem Israel from all their iniquities" (Ps 130:8).[13]

This understanding of the sequence of blessings 6 and 7 corresponds to the two strophes of the biblical verse, which are cited in the prayer for atonement of the Amidah of Yom Kippur: "I wiped away your sins like a cloud, your transgression like mist. Return to Me, for I redeem you" (Isa 44:22).[14] Such is the redemption/salvation that ensues from the removal of sins and the return to God.

The liturgical formulation for the theme of forgiveness in blesssing 6 goes as follows:

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edge of sin is the beginning of salvation," by Seneca, "For he who does not know that he has sinned does not desire correction" (*Epistulae Morales* 28.9).

11. תסלח לנו להיות גאולים, as in *b. Ber.* 29a, or סלח לנו גואלינו, as in *y. Ber.* 4:3, 8a, according to most manuscripts, including Venice and Leiden; see Peter Schäfer and Hans–Jürgen Becker, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi* (6 vols.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991–98), I/1–2, 122f.

12. This holds throughout the many textual variants; see Jacob Hadani, "Havinenu: Tefillah Qetsarah Me'en Shemoneh Esreh," *Sinai* 100 (1987): 305; and Shraga Abramson, "Le-toledot Ha-siddur" [Hebrew], *Sinai* 81 (1977): 202.

13. Elias J. Bickerman also argues that "benedictions 4–7 form a group centered on the idea of sin" ("The Civic Prayer for Jerusalem," *HTR* 55 [1962]: 172). A sin-centered unit requires that blessing 7 be about personal redemption and not national (*pace* Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service," *HUCA* 2 [1925]: 296, 310) or extrication from daily tribulations (*pace* Judah Halevy, *Sefer ha-Kuzari* [ed. Yehuda Even-Shmuel; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1972], 3:19; Rashi to *b. Meg.* 17b, s.v., *aṯalta*; and apparently *Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer*, 230). Baruch Bokser argues that the idea of personal redemption was introduced into the Passover celebration by the Palestinian Talmud's order to present a "personalized dimension of redemption which addresses each individual" ("Changing Views of Passover and the Meaning of Redemption according to the Palestinian Talmud," *AJS Review* 10 [1985]: 18). Thus, Rav (*y. Pesaḥ.* 10:4, 37d) applies the mishnaic ruling that the biblical recitation should open on a pejorative note and conclude on a complimentary one to the transition from idolatry to true worship. For him, this is evidence that the Palestinian Talmud "defines redemption as the release from the false ideology of idolatry" (15); see David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone, 1956), 281.

14. See E. D. Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor Le-Yamim Ha-Nora'im* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Koren, 1970), 2:5, with Jacob Mann, "Some Midrashic Genizah Fragments," *HUCA* 14 (1939): 322 n. 128. The liturgical understanding of this verse as personal redemption conforms to that of *Targum Jonathan*. David Kimhi (RaDaQ) and Isaac Abarbanel to Isa 44:22 understand it in terms of national redemption, either from Egypt or from Babylon.

	a	b	c
1.	Pardon us	our Father	for we have sinned.
	a	b	c
2.	Forgive us	our King	for we have rebelled.

3. Blessed are You, (gracious One)[15] who abundantly pardons.

The meaning of this blessing revolves around the question of whether there is any difference between the opening two strophes. A positive answer assumes that "pardon, "father," and "sin" form one cluster of associations, whereas "forgive," "king," and "rebellion" form another.[16] A negative answer assumes that *salaḥ* ("pardon") of the first is simply the biblical equivalent of the rabbinic *maḥal* ("forgive") of the second. According to the former, *salaḥ* could be deployed for its distinctive biblical meaning as reconcile or heal, for "when God extends His boon of *salaḥ*,[17] He thereby indicates His desire for reconciliation with man in order to continue His relationship with him."[18] In 1 Kgs 8:50, both terms for sin and rebellion are associated with "pardon."[19] In Ps 103:9–12 God is asked to remove both "as a father has mercy on His children." The formulation of the first strophe makes this point by designating the wrongdoing a sin, the term for inadvertence.[20] Appealing to God as father, we seek reconciliation. The goal may not be the eradication of the wrong, only its overlooking, as fathers tend to do. In the same vein, the specific point of the second strophe is made by designating the wrongdoing rebellion,[21] the term for deliberateness. Here, appealing to God as king, we seek amnesty. Since we rebelled against God as king, we seek to expunge the wrong from the record.

Indeed an alternate version reads: "Wipe out and forgive our acts of rebellion from before Your eyes for Your mercies are many."[22] The combining of the two convinces us that whether we have sinned or rebelled, we can be assured that

15. Many of the sources lack this word (חנון); see Yehezkel Luger, *The Weekday Amidah in the Cairo Genizah* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Orhot Press, 2001), 90.

16. Maimonides (see Mordechai Friedman, "Notes by a Disciple in Maimonides' Academy Pertaining to Beliefs and Concepts and Halakha" [Hebrew]. *Tarbiz* 62 [1993]: 547–50) and Judah b. Yaqar (*Perush ha-Tefillot ve-ha-Berakhot* [ed. Shmuel Yerushalmi; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Me'ore Yisra'el, 1968–69], 1:46), followed by Abudraham *(Tehillah Le-David*, 222) argue for the validity of these distinctions.

17. A term used only "of God who retains the exclusive prerogative of forgiveness" (Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20* [AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 1993], 367 n. 19).

18. Milgrom, *Numbers*, 396.

19. וסלחת לעמך אשר חטאו לך ולכל פשעיהם אשר פשעו בך.

20. See *t. Kippurim* 2:1 (ed. Lieberman, 2:229, l. 7): חטאתם אילו השגגות.

21. See *t. Kippurim* 2:1 (ed. Lieberman, 2:229, l. 7): פשעיהם אילו המרדים.

22. מחה והעבר על פשעינו מנגד עיניך כי רבים רחמיך (see Luger, *Weekday Amidah*, 87) apparently based on Ps 51:3b: כרב רחמיך מחה פשעי.

God as father and king[23] will forgive and be reconciled to us[24] as He expresses His graciousness by abundantly pardoning. Such a dynamic of forgiveness paves the way for the quest of redemption in blessing 7.

As blessing 6 leads into blessing 7, so blessing 5 leads into blessing 6. It is precisely the location of blessing 5 that makes the case for the centrality of Torah and service/prayer in the process of personal redemption. It goes as follows:

	a	b	c
1.	Bring us back	our Father	to Your Torah.
	a	b	c
2.	Draw us near	our King	to Your service.
	a	c	b
3.	Lead us back	by complete repentance	to Your presence.

4. Blessed are You who desires repentance.

The rhetoric of the blessing is a rhetoric of return. The first strophe is based on the parallel drawn by Nehemiah between "returning them to You" (Neh 9:26) and "returning them to Your Torah" (Neh 9:29). The point is that the return to God is through the Torah.[25] This version stands in contrast to the (Palestinian) alterna-

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23. It is noteworthy that the combination of father and king for God is only in the Babylonian version. While the Palestinian version uses "our Father" in blessing 6, neither epithet appears in its blessing 5. Similarly, according to the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Ta'an.* 25b) Akiva prayed "Our Father, our King, we have no king but You" but not in the parallel in the Palestinian Talmud (*y. Ta'an.* 3:4, 66c–d). These two epithets for God do not appear together in the Bible or at Qumran. The different Isaiahs do refer to God as "our King" (33:22), "King" (43:15, 52:7) and "our Father" (63:16; 64:7), but not both together. The titles do appear together in Greco-Roman literature; see Reuven Kimelman, "Blessing Formulae and Divine Sovereignty in Rabbinic Liturgy," in *Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer* (ed. Ruth Langer and Steven Fine; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 35f. In fact, according to Dio Chrysostom, Zeus "alone of the gods is entitled 'Father (*Pater*) and King (*Basileus*).' . . . He is addressed as King because of his dominion and power; as Father . . . on account of his solicitude for us and his kindness" (*The Twelfth, or Olympic, Discourse*, 55, 74–75, in Chrysostom, *Discourses* [trans. J. W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby; 5 vols.; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932–51], 2:61, 77).

Philo often referred to God as Father or King. In *On the Creation* alone, he calls God "Father of the universe" (*patera tōn holōn*; 72, see 74), "Father and Ruler of all" (*patros kai hēgemonos tōn pantōn*, 135), "Maker and Father" (*poiētou kai patros*, 7, 10, 21, 77 [à la Plato, *Timaeus* 28c]), and "Father and King" (*patros kai basileōs*, 144). A similar distinction is found in the Sabbath prayer הנח לנו ה אלהינו כי אתה אבינו ומלוך עלינו מהרה כי אתה מלכנו ("Grant us rest Adonai our God for You are our father, and reign over us quickly for You are our king," *Seder Rav Amram Gaon,* 79 line 5).

24. The peroration of the fourth (middle) blessing of the Yom Kippur Amidah (Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor Le-Yamim Ha-Nora'im*, 2:5f.) uses both terms together to cover all eventualities: כי אתה סלחן לישׂראל ומחלן לשׁבטי ישׁורון בכל דור ודור ומבלעדיך אין לנו מלך מוחל וסולח . . . ברוך אתה ה' מוחל וסולח לעונותינו.

25. This point is emphasized already in the Qumran texts by the expression לשוב אל תורת משה (see 1QS 5–6 and CD 15–16 with Bilhah Nitzan, "Repentance in the Dead Sea Scrolls,"

tive, which simply cites Lam 5:2, a verse on "returning" with no mention of Torah. Associating the two elements of Torah and return with the addressee "our Father," drives the point home.[26] Through both—"bring us back" and "our Father"—the case is made that to repent one need only recommit, not start over. The idea that repentance involves the recovery of lost ground by returning to God our father smooths the path for such a return. The argument for such an about-face is strengthened through the use of the same root (*shuv*) for both return and repentance.[27]

The second strophe's use of the multivalent term "service" (*'avodah*) demands that we make a series of associations.[28] Biblically, it could mean "grant us access to the Temple/cult service," since "to draw near" (*qarev*) is the technical term for access to the Temple, whereas "service" (*'avodah*) is the technical term for the cult.[29] Both *qarev* and *avodah* contain allusions to prayer and sacrifice.[30] The meaning of drawing near is retained in its Qumran and rabbinic use in the sense of gaining admission.[31] In the pilgrimage holiday liturgy, however, it refers to the Sinaitic revelation.[32] There, as here, God is addressed as "our king."[33] As a post-Temple formulation, however, the connotation of "service" points more to the

in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* [ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 1999], 2:146–52) and adumbrated by Neh 1:9: "And if you return to Me and keep My commandments." In contrast, Psalm 51 consists of a penitential scenario without mention of Torah or commandments.

26. On the invocation of God as father, see Eileen Schuller, "The Psalm of 4Q372 1 within the Context of Second Temple Prayer," *CBQ* 54 (1992): 75–79.

27. According to *Sifre Deut.* 345, ed. L. Finkelstein (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969), p. 402, lines 13–18, the same rhetoric of return is deployed in the description of the Torah as an "inheritance" (Deut 33:4). In general, late biblical literature shifts the emphasis of repentance from a protective act to a rehabilatative one; see Michael Fishbane, "תשובה" ["Repentance"], in *Entsiqlopedia Mikra'it* l (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1950–88), 8:953–58.

28. For the various links between *'avodah* and Torah, *mitsvot*, and prayer, see Judah ben Yaqar, *Perush ha-Tefillot ve-ha-Berakhot,* 1:45; and his student, Moses ben Nahman (RaMBaN) to Deut 6:13.

29. See Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 37, 87. Thus, when Israel is referred to as עם קרובו (Ps 148:14), it refers to the people that has access to God, for God is most accessible to Israel; see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 601.

30. See M. B. Lerner, "On the Beginnings of Liturgical Poetry: Midrashic and Talmudic Clarifications" [Hebrew], *Sidra* 9 (1993): 21f.

31. See Saul Lieberman, "The Discipline in the So-Called Dead Sea Manual of Discipline," *JBL* 71 (1952): 202 n. 36. Compare Hillel's expression מקרבן לתורה (*m. Avot* 1:12).

32. וקרבתנו מלכנו לעבודתך; see E. D. Goldschmidt, ed., *Maḥzor Sukkot, Shemini Atseret ve-Simḥat Torah* (Jerusalem: Koren, 1981), 9–11. This may also apply to קרבתנו לשמך in the second blessing before the Shema; see *Magen Avraham* to *Shulkhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 60:1. Based on this understanding and the above model, מלכנו has crept in recent centuries into the text, creating the version קרבתנו מלכנו לשמך.

33. For the use of "King" in this blessing and the next, see Friedman, "Notes by a Disciple in Maimonides' Academy," 547–50.

general service of God, as it appears in the Passover Haggadah,[34] or to prayer as the service of the heart, as it appears elsewhere in rabbinic literature.[35] There is also the association with *m. Avot* 1:2, where "the world/age stands on three things: Torah, *ʿavodah*, and acts of piety." This tripartite statement parallels significantly the three in our blessing: Torah, *ʿavodah*, and repentance. In both cases, the term *ʿavodah* bears a similar range of associations.

Even if the rabbinic meanings are foregrounded here, the appropriation of cultic terminology for communal prayer keeps the cultic connotation close to consciousness.[36] Indeed, the choice of the term is dictated by the desire to suggest both meanings simultaneously to the reader. Sometimes this process creates a primary or dominant meaning alongside a secondary one. In this case, both meanings suggest themselves equally, thus enriching the thought or emotion of the reader.[37] As such, the use of *ʿavodah* for worship reinforces the policy of replacing the daily Tamid sacrifice by fixed communal prayer[38] along with making the point that God is now as accessible through communal prayer as He had been through the cult.

The equivalency of prayer and the cult is made explicit in blessing 17, where the word for "prayer" (*tefillah*) is interpolated into an ancient blessing on the Temple service (*ʿavodah*) twice. The resultant *abab* structure alternates between "prayer" and "service":

1. Be pleased Adonai, our God, with Your people Israel and their *tefillah*
2. Return the **ʿavodah** to Your Temple precincts
3. Accept willingly and lovingly the offerings[39] of Israel and their *tefillah*
4. May the **ʿavodah** of Your people Israel always (*tamid*)[40] be acceptable to You.[41]

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34. מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו ועכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו ("Initially our fathers were idol-worshipers, but now God has brought us close to His service"); see E. D. Goldschmidt, *The Passover Haggadah: Its Sources and History* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1960), 13f.

35. *Sifre Deut*. 41, p. 86.

36. The double entendre is caught by *Sifre Deut*. 85, in glossing Deut 13:5 ואותו תעבודו ("And you shall serve Him") by עבדו בתורתו עבדו במקדשו ("Serve Him through His Torah; serve Him through His Temple").

37. On this phenomenon, see Reuven Kimelman, *The Mystical Meaning of Lekhah Dodi and Kabbalat Shabbat* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2003), 88f.

38. *B. Ber.* 26b; see Reuven Kimelman, "Rabbinic Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period,* vol. 4 of *The Cambridge History of Judaism* (ed. Steven T. Katz; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 584–88.

39. Or "gifts"; see Milgrom, *Numbers*, 124.

40. The use of this word here may evoke the daily *tamid* offering, reinforcing the thesis that *tefillah* replaces the daily *tamid*.

41.
1. רצה ה' א-להינו בעמך ישׂראל *ובתפילתם*
2. והשׁב את <u>העבודה</u> לדביר ביתך
3. ואישׁי ישׂראל *ותפליתם* באהבה תקבל ברצון
4. ותהי לרצון <u>תמיד</u> <u>עבודת</u> ישׂראל עמך

By alternating *tefillah* and **'avodah** as if they were interchangeable, the blessing creates an equivalency between them. It also intersperses three times forms of the technical term for the acceptance of a sacrifice (*le-raṣon*) (Lev 1:4; 19:7; Isa 57:7). They are rendered above as "be pleased," "accept willingly," and "be acceptable."[42] The location of this blessing at the head of the last triad of the Amidah guarantees that the term *tefillah* refers to the entire series of blessings as a liturgical unit. Note also that whereas the transitive verb "return/restore" in the older blessing 17 refers to the Temple cult, in blessing 7 it refers to Torah. The shift underscores the valorizing of Torah over *'avodah*. In the same vein *m. Avot* 1:2 states that "the world/age stands on three things: Torah, *'avodah*, and acts of piety." The three are redolent of the biblical triadic formulation—*'avodah*, Torah, and *mitsvah* (2 Chr 31:21)—save that the rabbinic formulation emphasizes the primacy of Torah by placing it first through reversing the order of the first two.[43]

The third strophe of blessing 5 reverses the order of the previous strophes. Whereas strophes 1 and 2 are parallel, both adhering to a pattern of *abc*, strophe 3 reverses the order of *b* and *c,* making the pattern *acb*. Thus, the blessing concludes with "before You." The result is that the return to Torah[44] and the drawing near to the service of God become the means for the complete repentance that is epitomized by being brought "before You."[45] This climactic conclusion is accen-

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באהבה of l. 3 is absent from many sources. In fact, *Siddur Rabbenu Shelomoh b. R. Natan* (*Hasigilmasi*) (ed. Sh. Ḥaggai; Jerusalem, 1995), 16, reads in the third strophe תפילתם ועבודתם as do six Genizah fragments (see Luger, *The Weekday Amidah in the Cairo Genizah,* 177 n. 20), while Jacob b. Jehuda, *Eṣ Ḥayyim* (ed. I. Brodie; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1962), 90, reads ותערב לפניך תפילתינו כעולה וכקרבן ("May our prayers be pleasing to You as an offering and as a sacrifice").

42. Following Lawrence Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 109. See Lev 1:4; 19:7; Isa 56:7. This emphasis is the culmination of a process. Isaiah underscored the parallel between sacrifice and prayer, but reserved the word לרצון (56:7) for sacrifices. *The Prayer of Azariah* (17), which may hark back to the Maccabean persecution, attached the term to a contrite heart as though it were a sacrifice. At Qumran, *The Damascus Document,* based on Prov 15:8, states: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, but the prayer of the just is like an offering of רצון (11:21), and *The Rule of the Community* states: "The offering of the lips in compliance with the decree will be like the pleasant aroma of justice and the correctness of behavior will be like an offering of רצון" (9:4–5). On the replacement of sacrifices by prayer at Qumran, see Kimelman, "Rabbinic Prayer in Late Antiquity," 587f.

43. See Judah Goldin, "The Three Pillars of Simeon the Righteous," *PAAJR* 27 (1958): 43–58.

44. This emphasis on Torah distinguishes it from the parallel sentiments in the Qumran *Thanksgiving Scroll* (1QH^a 15:26–33) and Psalm 51. Psalm 25 does have the whole scenario in embryo, albeit dispersed, as pointed out by Moshe Weinfeld, "The Prayers for Knowledge, Repentance, and Forgiveness in the 'Eighteen Benedictions'—Qumran Parallels, Biblical Antecedents, and Basic Characteristics" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 48 (1979): 186–200.

45. The reversal of the order of the final strophe not only marks completion but also privileges the final word as climax. For a similar instance, see *m. Avot* 3:13 (R. Akiva).

tuated by replacing the normal biblical preposition for the verb "return," namely, "to you" by "to Your presence." The result is that all three strophes end with a term whose first letter is ל.

The climax of "to Your presence" is enhanced by the resulting rhyme scheme, as can easily be seen from the following way of charting blessing 5:

c	b	a
1. השיבנו	אבינו	לתורתיך
2. קרבינו	מלכינו	לעבודתיך
3. והחזירנו	בתשובה שלימה	לפניך

The rhyme scheme of strophes 1 and 2 is *aab*, whereas strophe 3 is *acb*. By reversing in the final strophe the scheme of *aab* to *acb* near perfect symmetry is achieved. Finally, it should be noted that the peroration of blessings 5 and 6 end with a statement of God's character, the purpose of which is to provide motivation for the appeal. The peroration of blessing 5 states: "Blessed are You, Lord, who desires repentance," while that of blessing 6 states: "Blessed are You, Lord, gracious One who pardons abundantly." It thus continues the biblical tradition of penitential prayers that emphasize God's graciousness to assure a favorable response to confession.[46]

The significance of the location of this blessing on Torah in the redemptive scheme is highlighted by the following comparison of blessing 7 with the biblical mint whence it was coined:

Ps 119:153–54	*Blessing*
A. See my affliction and rescue me,	A. See our affliction
B. for I have not neglected Your Torah.	
C. Champion my cause and redeem me.	C. Champion our cause and redeem us.

Besides the standard change from Bible to liturgy of singular to plural, both Psalm and blessing assume that redemption is grounded in Torah. What the former has to state, the latter, by virtue of its strategic position in the order of the Amidah, can presume.

In sum, the individual deliverance motif of blessing 7 extends the personal redemptive scenario to four blessings: the understanding graciously granted by God in blessing 4 is pressed into the return to Torah et al., of blessing 5,[47] which

46. See Mark J. Boda, "Confession as Theological Expression: Ideological Origins of Penitential Prayer," in *Seeking the Favor of God,* vol. 1, *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda et al.; SBLEJL 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 39–43.

47. As noted by Judah Halevy, *Sefer ha-Kuzari* 3:19 (ed. Yehuda Even-Shmuel, 116, bottom) and made explicit in the beginning of the interpolation in the Amidah at the conclusion of Sab-

in turn sparks the awareness of sin that leads to the seeking of forgiveness of blessing 6, which in turn paves the way for the atonement of personal redemption of blessing 7.[48]

One of the interesting questions in penitential studies is whether the prayers can be used as grist for the production of historical data.[49] One such effort to explain blessings 4–7 of the Amidah as a reflex of the historical situation is that of the late Ezra Fleischer. His theory is part of a comprehensive theory that grasps the whole Amidah in literary and historical terms. His understanding of blessings 4–7 are part of his understanding of all of the intermediate blessings. He describes them as follows:

> a chronologically organized plan, in logical sequence, for the rebuilding of the nation from its post-destruction historical reality to its spiritual and political restoration in the ideal future. . . . Thus they pray that God grant them the knowledge to understand their situation ("He who grants knowledge" [blessing 4]), to know why their world fell apart, and their temple was destroyed, and their independence taken from them. Were they granted the knowledge—they would realize that their iniquities caused their punishment and they would repent ("He who desires repentance" [blessing 5]); by the merit of their

baths and festivals, אתה חוננתנו למדע תורתך according to the Ashkenazic version (see *Maḥzor Vitry*, by R. Simḥah Me-Vitry [ed. A. Goldschmidt; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Makhon Otsar Hapesukim, 2004] 2:310) and Genizah versions such as: חננו אבינו דעה מאתך / ובינה והשׂכל מתורתך (Solomon Schechter, "Genizah Specimens," *JQR* o.s. 10 [1898]: 657, lines 1–2); אבינו הביננו דעה לתלמוד תורתך (Simcha Assaf, "From the Order of Prayer in the Land of Israel" [Hebrew], in *Sefer Dinaburg* (ed. Yitzhak Baer et al.; Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1949), 117); דעת ותבונה תתן בלבינו / הביננו לשׂמור פקודיך (Ezra Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer and Prayer Rituals as Portrayed in the Genizah Documents* [Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988], 71); and חנינו דיעה מאתך / ולמדנו בינה מתורתך (Naphtali Wieder, *The Formation of Jewish Liturgy in the East and the West: A Collection of Essays* [2 vols.; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1998], 1:113); see also Luger, *Weekday Amidah*, 76–78. The formulation appears already in the Dead Sea Scrolls as: הביניני ה' בתורתכה ואת משפטכה למדני (11QPs[a] 24:8). On God as teacher of Torah, see Reuven Kimelman, "The Shema' Liturgy: From Covenant Ceremony to Coronation," in *Kenishta: Studies in Synagogue Life* (ed. Joseph Tabory; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan Press, 2001), 46.

48. Marmorstein also states: "The prayers for knowledge, return to God, forgiveness of sin, and redemption belong formally and logically together. Wisdom and learning lead to repentance, repentance to the step leading to forgiveness of sin. Atonement causes redemption. These are preparatory means of the eschatological benedictions X–XVI" (Arthur Marmorstein, "A Misunderstood Question in the Yerushalmi," *JQR* 20 [1929/1930]: 319). I differ only with regard to the relationship between the sections. For me, the experiences of personal redemption, restoration of health, and agricultural revival function more as grist for belief in the eschatological blessings than as "preparatory means" for the latter. Otherwise, physical and agrarian recovery would also have to be considered "preparatory means" for the eschaton, a reading that both of us reject.

49. For the difficulties in making the case, see Samuel Balentine, "Afterword," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda et al.; SBLEJL 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 198–202.

> repentance God would make atonement for their iniquities and forgive them ("He who multiplies repentance" [blessing 6]). The pardoning of their iniquities would open the gate to the repair of their condition. God would redeem them (in the present) from every trouble, adversary, and tribulation ("He who redeems Israel" [blessing 7]), and heal their sick ("He who heals His people Israel" [blessing 8]), and give them sustenance to endure their subjugation until the end time ("He who blesses the years"). To this point [the prayer sequence deals with] the restoration of the national condition in the present, which is temporary, necessary but not sufficient for the true restoration of the nation is not in the present but the future, in which, at the end of a gradual and slow process, she shall return to her former state and merit again her independence. This eschatological process has the following stages: [namely, blessings 10–15].[50]

The advantage of reading blessings 4–9 in this way is that they comprise a single story line somewhat parallel to blessings 10–15. Moreover, the middle section divides into two symmetrical halves. As Fleischer goes on to say, the first half is really an introductory blessing plus five, whereas the second part consists of five blessings plus a concluding one. What begins as a set of 1 + 5 ends as set of 5 + 1.

The weakness in the theory lies not in its literary structure but in its anchoring of meaning in historical events. It assumes that the Amidah was composed as a reaction to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. The evidence for explaining the content of the Amidah as a direct response to the destruction of the Temple is as slim as the evidence for explaining the content of the Mishnah as a direct response to the debacle of the the Bar-Kokhba revolt of 135 C.E.[51] Predicating literary analysis on an excessive adherence to a historical happening is always fraught with danger. Modern literary analysis has highlighted the gap between historical happenings and their literary formulation.[52] Moreover, single motifs fit a variety of historical backgrounds. A blessing for knowledge, for instance, is far too common to be limited to a single historical moment in time. Such a blessing constitutes a staple of Qumran, Christian, and rabbinic prayer independent of any connection to any specific event of history.[53] By arguing for a historical specificity for the blessing of knowledge, Fleischer's position becomes subject to the critique leveled against

50. Ezra Fleischer, "The Shemone Esre: Its Character, Internal Order, Content and Goals" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 62 (1993): 198 (my translation).

51. See John Poirier, "Jacob Neusner, The Mishnah, and Ventriloquism," *JQR* 87 (1996): 68 n. 19.

52. In fact, the two blessings whose formulation most likely reflects a specific historical situation (12 and 13), lack any consensus on their historical provenance; see, e.g., Reuven Kimelman, "*Birkat ha-Minim* and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition,* vol. 2, *Aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period* (ed. E. P. Sanders et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981); and David Flusser, "The Second Benediction of the Amida and a Text from Qumran," *Tarbiz* 64 (1995): 331–34.

53. See Weinfeld, "Prayers for Knowledge," 194f.; and Jacob Licht, *The Thanksgiving Scroll* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1957), 42f.

the classic critical-historical method for its historical reductionism, namely, the reducing of liturgical formulations to reflexes of historical events.[54]

The analysis can be further faulted for its reliance on the peroration (*ḥitum/ḥatimah*) of the blessings without due consideration of their content. Admittedly, any analysis of the blessing must be based on the peroration, as it is the key to the blessing's thrust as well as its most stable part. Still, one may not disregard the body of the blessing whatever its variations. Fleischer's total disregard of the body of the blessing reflects the perspective of early *piyyuṭim*.[55] Only by such disregard of the body of the fourth blessing could Fleischer consider the knowledge therein to be of the Jews' political plight and the theological explanation thereof. On the contrary, the Amidah makes no explicit reference to the destruction nor to any explanation of it. At most, the destruction and exile become implicit only in blessings ten to fifteen, which deal with the restoration. Since they do not even enter the consciousness of the worshiper until after the first six intermediate blessings, they cannot be used to explain any of them, surely not the first. Without reference to such knowledge or its explanation elsewhere in the Amidah, no reader could be expected to grasp the point of the blessing.

It is precarious to view the daily Amidah through the prism of the *musaf* pilgrimage holiday liturgy, whose topic sentence is: "Because of our sins we were exiled from our land." On the contrary, the daily Amidah differs from its holiday counterpart precisely in the absence of any explicit references to the destruction and the exile. Even more surprising is the fact that the confession and request for forgiveness of blessing 6 do not specify any sin, whether individual or national, nor do they seek to prevent or to remove any punishment or affliction, unlike so many Second Temple liturgical confessionals.[56] In contrast to the multitude of biblical prayers that focus on "delivery from the danger of death, from threat of enemies, from natural disasters, etc.," the Amidah focuses neither on hardship and deprivation nor on oppression. Except for the destruction of the wicked, which is a commonplace of redemptive scenarios, there is hardly a negative note.[57] Clearly, the daily Amidah and the holiday Amidah have distinct agendas.

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54. For critiques of this approach, see Richard Sarason's discussion of "Historical-Philological Studies" in his "On the Use of Method in the Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism,* vol. 1, *Theory and Practice* (ed. W. S. Green; BJS 1; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), esp. 116; and Reuven Kimelman, "Liturgical Studies in the 90's," *Jewish Book Annual* 52 (1994–95/5755): 61–67. For a good example of the unconvincing efforts to "historicize" the blessings, see Ismar Elbogen, *Studien zur Geschichte des jüdischen Gottesdienstes* (Berlin, 1907), 21, on blessing 11; and David Flusser, "Some of the Precepts of the Torah from Qumran (4QMMT) and the Benediction against the Heretics" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 61 (1992): 366–74, on blessings 11–13.

55. See, e.g., Elazar Qallir's synopsis of the Amidah in *Maḥzor Le-Yamim Ha-Nora'im* (ed. Goldschmidt), 2:307f.

56. See Nitzan, "Repentance in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 161.

57. As noted by Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (STDJ 12; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 82, 84 n. 109.

Fleischer is right, however, in emphasizing how much the meaning of a blessing is derivative of its sequence. He repeatedly correlates the meaning of a blessing with its location in the Amidah. Since the fixed sequence of the Amidah attests to an organizing principle, it is clear that the meaning of an individual blessing may be as much dependent on its location as on its content. In the case of blessings 4 and 5, however, the divinely granted knowledge of the former is to be applied not to their social and religious reality but to the Torah of the latter.

His contention that blessings 7–9 constitute a remedy for the national condition presents a similar problem. Whereas all agree that the meaning of blessing 7 is problematic (see above), it is hard to imagine blessings of healing and agriculture prosperity becoming symptomatic of the national condition in the wake of the destruction. Such blessings are far too general and universal to be locked into any specific historical condition. Indeed, they are probably not even Israel-specific, for though the Babylonian version of blessing 8 concludes with "He who heals the sick of His people Israel," the Palestinian version has only "He who heals the sick."[58] Similarly, the prosperity of blessing 9 is brought about by proper rainfall for the world in general and not just for the Land of Israel.[59] Indeed were these the salient deficiencies of post-Temple Israel, their remedy would have been prominent in the upcoming eschatological blessings. There is, however, no mention of them at all. In sum, as blessings 8–9 reflect the human condition, not limited to any specific historical context, so do blessings 4–7.

Methodological Postscript

It is evident how precarious it is to jump from the Hebrew Bible to rabbinic literature without factoring in the liturgical developments during the Second Temple period, especially those at Qumran. The more we know about liturgical developments in the Second Temple period, the more we see a ramp and not a staircase. Indeed, scholars should take to heart the biblical exhortation: "Do not ascend My altar by steps, that your nakedness not be exposed upon it."

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58. For the Babylonian version, see *b. Šab.* 12a and *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon*, 18; for the Palestinian, see *y. Ber.* 2:4, 5a; *Sifre Deut*. 343, ed. Finkelstein, 395, line 5f. Even *b. ʿAbod. Zar.* 8a, dubs the blessing ברכת החולים ("the blessing of the sick") as *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* dubs it רפואת החולים ("the healing of the sick"). Nonetheless, extant versions of the blessing all conclude with "the sick of His people Israel"; see Luger, *Weekday Amidah*, 101.

59. Thus the emphasis on "earth" as opposed to "land," as noted by Louis Ginzberg, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* [Hebrew] (4 vols.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1941–61), 1:323, bottom; and as evidenced by the versions of *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon*, 21; *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, 25, line 29f.; Maimonides, *Liturgy*, 199, line 15; and *Minhag Benei Roma*, in *On Jewish Liturgy* (ed., Goldschmidt), 158, all of which contain a version of the following: ושבע את העולם כולו מברכות טובך ורוה פני תבל מעושר מתנות ידך ("and satiate the whole world from the blessings of Your goodness and fill the face of the earth from the wealth of the gifts of Your hand" [*Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon*, 21]).

The Amidah Benediction on Forgiveness: Links between Its Theology and Its Textual Evolution

Stefan C. Reif

Other contributors to this volume have dealt broadly with the nature of penitential prayer in rabbinic Judaism, the manner in which it differs from its equivalent in the Second Temple period, and the forms that it took in early synagogal poetry (*piyyuṭim*), as well as in the medieval and modern liturgies.[1] It therefore seemed to me, when choosing my own topic for this collection of essays, that I might focus more sharply on one of the relevant benedictions in the Amidah and attempt to trace how it relates to earlier material, how its text evolved in the talmudic and post-talmudic (geonic) periods, and how it was understood by some of those involved in explicating its religious meaning and message. In order successfully to complete such an agenda, it will be necessary to deal with linguistic and literary matters as well as theological ones, and to include in the discussion some remarks on how Jewish liturgical history through the ages is to be accurately reconstructed.

Jewish penitential prayer is, of course, not simply the performance of physical acts of mourning and worship, accompanied by exercises in self-effacement, contrition, historical reflection, and repentance, with a view to recreating oneself in a better religious image, although those are undoubtedly central parts of the spiritual intention.[2] Given that inadequate religious behavior also disturbs the relationship between Israel and its God and reflects a degree of rebellion on the human side of the covenant, the object of such prayer is to request divine forgiveness so that, as it were, the slate may be wiped clean and any damage made good. It is therefore hardly surprising that the fifth benediction of the Amidah, which

1. See, particularly, the articles of Richard Sarason (pp. 1–38), Ruth Langer (pp. 39–69), Reuven Kimelman (pp. 71–84), and Laura Lieber (pp. 99–125) elsewhere in this volume.

2. See Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism. The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 14; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999); and Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk and Rodney A. Werline, eds., *Seeking the Favor of God,* vol. 1, *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

requests God's assistance in bringing about the worshiper's sincere and far-ranging repentance, should immediately be followed by an entreaty for the assurance of God's forgiveness. The wish is for guidance to true *tešuvah* (repentance) and the granting of divine *seliḥah* (forgiveness). It is the latter benediction—the sixth in the Amidah—that will occupy our close attention in this essay.[3]

But what is to be our starting point if we wish to examine how the text of this benediction is likely to have commenced its liturgical life and the manner in which it evolved through the early centuries of rabbinic religious development? Various talmudic texts refer to the benediction, but none of them records any more than its opening and (perhaps) closing words. This is a common phenomenon in the early history of rabbinic prayer which prevents us from assuming that what became the standard forms in the geonic period are already to be taken for granted in the tannaitic and amoraic eras that preceded it.[4] What we are forced to do is to look for the most reliable text in the geonic period and then postulate, on the basis of the biblical, Second Temple, and talmudic evidence, what are likely to have been its earliest elements.

The consensus is that the evidence we have for the prayer book of Saadia ben Joseph, Gaon of the Babylonian rabbinic center in Sura from 928 to 942, is at least a good reflection of the text that he originally composed, since the primary manuscript, as well as the many fragments from the Cairo Genizah, permit the reconstruction of a rather stable and consistent version. That it remains unclear to us whether that version is essentially from the communities of Egypt, the Land of Israel or Iraq makes difficulties for those attempting to trace the emergence and interrelationship of such rites but does not adversely affect our present purpose.[5] As far as the prayer book of Amram ben Sheshna Gaon is concerned, it was certainly written before that of Saadia, but its text is undoubtedly less well preserved, having been seriously altered by the influences of later rites in the various communities where it was cited and used. In this case it is not greatly different

3. For the standard modern editions and translations of the Ashkenazi and Sefardi versions of these benedictions, see Moses Gaster, *The Book of Prayer and Order of Service according to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews* (London: Frowde, 1901–6), 1:32; and S. Singer, *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, with a New Translation by the Rev. S. Singer* (London: Wertheimer, Lea, 1890), 46 (and many subsequent editions). In his contribution to this volume, Richard Sarason has astutely described this form of penitential rhetoric as "a somewhat low-key appearance" (p. 4 above).

4. See Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 122–27.

5. The place of Saadia's prayer book in the critical study of Jewish liturgy (especially in contrast to that of Amram ben Sheshna Gaon) is briefly but succinctly discussed in Reif, *Hebrew Prayer,* 185–88, and in Robert Brody, "Liturgical Use of the Book of Psalms in the Geonic Period," in *Prayers That Cite Scripture* (ed. James L. Kugel; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 63–66.

from the text of Saadia, but the latter is decidedly more reliable.[6] Saadia's Hebrew text (followed by my own English translation) reads as follows:[7]

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו ומחול לנו מלכנו כי פשענו ב א י חנון ומרבה לסלוח

> Forgive us, our Father, that we have sinned, and pardon us, our King, that we have done wrong. You, Lord, are to be praised as the One who generously and consistently grants forgiveness.

To be particularly noted in this text are that there are two requests for forgiveness, one addressing God as Israel's father and the other as Israel's king, in a form of parallelism that is reminiscent of biblical Hebrew poetry; that the forgiveness is required in response to the inadequate religious behavior of the worshiping community, represented by the "we" and the "us" of the entreaty; and that the concluding eulogy refers to God in a somewhat complex fashion. The language, structure, and meaning of the benediction in this form must now be compared with the evidence from earlier periods.

With regard to the notion of סליחה ("forgiveness") in the Hebrew Bible, the subject is almost invariably God, and it is usually improper acts, often described by the Hebrew words חטא ("sin"), פשע ("transgression") and עון ("iniquity"), that are being forgiven and only occasionally those who have perpetrated them.[8] It is presupposed that one of the divine attributes is a fundamental willingness to forgive, and, even if punishment is not precluded, such an attribute is almost always exercised (Num 14:20; Pss 86:5; 103:3; 130:4). One of the purposes of the human approach to God is, as it were, to jog the divine memory by referring to God in terms of such an attribute and thereby to activate that tendency, with successful results for the one making the entreaty (Isa 55:7; Neh 9:17; Dan 9:9).Only rarely is the verb used in the imperative form (סלח) as a direct address to God, and the norm is for the suppliant to supply some sort of justification, explanation, or expansion of his request (Num 14:19; 1 Kgs 8; Amos 7:2). The stem tends not to occur in parallelisms, is only once used in association with the epithet חנון (Neh 9:17), and appears with the hiphil conjugation of the stem רבה only in Isa 55:7: כי ירבה לסלוח. The stem מחל is simply not biblical Hebrew, not being attested

6. *Seder Rav Amram*, ed. N. Coronel (Warsaw: Kelter, 1865), 8; ed. A. L. Frumkin (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Zuckerman, 1912), 1:242; ed. D. Hedegård (Lund: Lindstedt, 1951), 35 [Hebrew], 88 [English]; ed. E. D. Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1971), 24, 95.

7. *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* (ed. Israel Davidson et al.; Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1941; 2nd ed. 1963), 18.

8. Exod 34:9; Jer 31:34; 33:8; 36:3; 1 Kgs 8:50. There is an excellent summary of the uses of the stem in the Hebrew Bible by J. Hausmann, "סָלַח, *sālaḥ*; סַלָּח, *sallāḥ*; סְלִיחָה, *s'lîḥâ*," in *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H.-J. Fabry (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 10:258–65. See also the distinct levels of evil presupposed by these terms, as explained in Roy E. Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 215–302.

until early tannaitic literature.[9] As for the substantives אבינו and מלכנו, they are not linked with divine forgiveness, although the former is used metaphorically to describe Israel's relationship with God [10] There is no evidence of a standard or daily request for forgiveness, only of entreaties formulated on special occasions in accordance with the contemporary or local need or crisis.[11]

If we move into the apocryphal or Deutero-canonical literature, there is a passage in Ben Sira that is particularly intriguing in this context. The Hebrew text (with my own English translation) reads as follows:

אל תאמר חטאתי ומה יעשה לי מאומה כי אל ארך אפים הוא
אל תאמר רחום יי וכל עונותי ימחה
אל סליחה אל תבטח להוסיף עון על עון
ואמרת רחמיו רבים לרוב עונותי יסלח
כי רחמים ואף עמו ואל רשעים ינוח רגזו

Do not say "I have sinned but God will do nothing to me since he is divinely patient." Do not say "The Lord is merciful and will blot out all my iniquities."
Do not rely on such forgiveness and compound your iniquities,
Saying "His mercies are manifold and he will forgive all my iniquities."
For God can be angry as well as merciful and his wrath can alight upon the wicked (Sir 5:5–9 [Greek 5:4–6]).[12]

What is being suggested by this passage is that there was some anxiety on the part of Ben Sira and the circles he represented about taking it for granted that God would by his very nature always prove to be forgiving. This apparently militates against so many earlier passages in the Hebrew Bible that can legitimately be understood to be making such a presupposition. There are two other points to be made. In addition to the usual usage of the words סליחה, חטא, and עון, there is a use of the metaphor of "wiping away" sin, which is present already in biblical Hebrew texts. God's kindness and generosity are also linked with the notion of

9. *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew by Eliezer Ben Yehuda of Jerusalem* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem/New York: Yoseloff, 1908–59, 1960), 2911–12; A. Even Shoshan, *Hamillon Heḥadash* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1979), 1295–96. I was able to check usage of the two stems by consulting "Maagarim," the subscription online database of the Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language prepared at the Hebrew Language Academy in Jerusalem.

10. As in Isa 63:16; 64:7; and 1 Chr 29:10.

11. Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 195.

12. See Israel Lévi, *The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus* (3rd ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1969), 5; Moshe H. Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira haShalem* (2nd rev. ed.; Jerusalem: Bialik, 1958), 30; Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes, Introduction and Commentary* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 179, 182.

forgiveness, as if to stress that it requires more than activation of one divine attribute for sin to be expunged from the record (Sir 16:14 [Greek 16:11]).[13]

The emphasis in some of the Qumran texts that deal with our topic is somewhat similar, indicating a strong belief that those who repent and who are in God's favor will be forgiven while the others will be punished. According to the *Words of the Luminaries* (4Q504), confession and supplication are part of that process of repentance (frgs. 1–2 vi 2–6). Although such a notion is undoubtedly present in the later rabbinic *taḥanun* (supplicatory) texts, Lawrence H. Schiffman is correct in concluding that "we cannot claim on this evidence that . . . [such texts] go back to Second Temple times."[14] The extensive and generous nature of divine forgiveness is also a recurrent theme, sometimes expressed in the form of poetic parallelism, and generally flagged by such expressions as רוב סליחות/סליחה, רוב רחמים, המון רחמים, גדול רחמים, רוב טוב, נדבת לב, and חסד.[15] One of the most characteristic of such verses is 1QH[a] 15[7]:29–30, which reads as follows (followed by my English translation):

וכול בני אמיתכה תביא בסליחות לפניכה לטהרם מפשעיהם ברוב טובכה ובהמון
ר[ח]מיכה להעמידם לפניכה לעולמי עד

> You will bring all your loyal followers before you for forgiveness, purifying them of their disobedience through your goodness and manifold mercies, and granting them audience with you for all time.

The next task is to take stock of what may genuinely be learned from the talmudic literature about the forgiveness benediction, without becoming too involved in the wider issue of the origins and early development of the whole Amidah, a putative exercise that would take us greatly beyond our present remit. It is clear that between the second and fourth centuries the rabbis were still explaining and justifying the number and order of the benedictions in the Amidah.[16] Whether this was a dialectical exercise or had the practical intent of adding to the authority of the ritual practice remains open to debate.[17] It is clear that there was already

13. Lévi, *Ecclesiasticus*, 25; Segal, *Ben Sira*, 96; and Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 268–69, 274. For the biblical texts on "wiping away" and "removing," see Isa 43:25; Ps 51:3, 11 (מחה); and 2 Sam 24:10 (העבר).

14. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia/Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 297; see also the reconstruction of 4Q506, 131–32.

15. See, for example, 1QS 2:8; 1QH[a] 6[14]:24; 14[6]:9; 17[9]:34; 19[11]:9; CD 2:4; 4Q257 1 ii 5; 4Q400 1 i 18; and 4Q427 7 ii 16. I am grateful to the library of Tyndale House, Cambridge, and to Dr. David Instone Brewer, of its permanent academic staff, for kindly providing electronic access to Qumran material.

16. See *y. Ber.* 2:4 (4d) and 4:3 (8a), Ms. Leiden 2.3 and 4.3, ed. J. Sussmann, cols. 18 and 38.

17. For example, *b. Meg.* 17b certainly has the flavor of a later piece of dialectic that links verses and topics in an *ex post facto* exegesis of the Amidah's order.

a benediction requesting divine forgiveness, that it was sixth in the order of the daily office, that it followed the benediction for repentance, that it commenced with the words סלח לנו ("forgive us") and probably concluded with a description of God as מרבה לסלוח ("consistently granting forgiveness").[18] It occurred, with repentance, in a group of benedictions that constituted entreaties for divine blessing on the most mundane and personal of daily requirements, such as intelligence, rescue, health, environment, and it seems reasonable to suppose that they were included there to add a more spiritual dimension to such topics. Finkelstein argues that they are older than the more mundane items but that they may simply have come from an alternative, original context and been simultaneously joined with the others when the Amidah was composed.[19]

As far as the theology of forgiveness is concerned, the rabbis of course struggled with this, as all monotheists always have, trying to reconcile the notions of divine love and forgiveness, repentance, and fair recompense for human behavior. They certainly adhere to the scriptural concept of the ubiquity and comprehensiveness of God's forgiving attribute, but they are at the same time aware of divergent approaches to the manner in which this attribute relates to other, equally central, theological ideas. Without ever losing their awareness of the complications, what the later talmudic rabbis appear to have done is to have given an increasing importance to the notion of repentance, arguing for its greater power than prayer, its relevance to all sin and its centrality especially during the ten days from Rosh Hashanah (New Year) to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).[20] In the words of Ephraim Urbach, the "Amoraim followed the doctrine of the Tannaim, and even enlarged the sphere and power of repentance, to the point of extravagance."[21] Morris Joseph put it neatly and succinctly: "The Divine forgiveness, then, is moral, spiritual. The sinner is not let off, in the schoolboy's sense of the expression, but is taken back to the arms of the loving Father."[22]

Moving on to the language and literary style of the benediction, there is a distinct wariness on the part of the earlier rabbinic authorities about confusing written, received Scripture with their own oral liturgy, as recently stressed by Shlomo Naeh.[23] This led them, wherever possible and practical, to prefer their own vocabulary, style, and formulation, especially in the earliest period of rabbinic

18. See *y. Roš. Haš.* 4:6 (59c), Ms. Leiden 4.5, ed. J. Sussmann, col. 678.

19. Louis Finkelstein, "The Development of the Amidah," *JQR* n.s. 16 (1925–26): 10–11, 18, 43, 146–47.

20. Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (trans. Israel Abrahams; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975), 1:462–71.

21. Ibid., *Sages*, 1:467.

22. Morris Joseph, *Judaism as Creed and Life* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1903), 126.

23. Shlomo Naeh, "The Role of Biblical Verses in Prayer according to the Rabbinic Tradition" in *Prayers That Cite Scripture* (ed. James L. Kugel; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 43–59.

prayer. Gradually, however, it became more acceptable, and consequently more common, to adopt and adapt biblical models in a more direct fashion. Although Joseph Heinemann's form-critical approach tends to prefer synchronic to diachronic explanations, he does seem to imply that biblical versions of the rabbinic prayers are early.[24] Louis Finkelstein had, however, already made the valid point that one can envisage rabbis changing their own forms to more biblical ones, but it would have been highly controversial had they rejected a biblical formulation that was already part of their liturgical tradition in favor of their own composition.[25] Also to be taken into account is the rabbinic suspicion of any customs that were characteristic of such groups as that (or those?) of Qumran.[26]

There is also considerable doubt about whether the formulators of the earliest benedictions inserted into the body of an entreaty to God a variety of metaphorical, divine epithets in the vocative (such as "king" and "father" and "master") that are no more than parenthetical to the whole theme. If they did address God vocatively and parenthetically, would it not have been via his more direct names such as אלהים and אדני?[27] The inclusion of a justification for optimism, as it were, that says something like "please grant us *x* because you are the generous provider of *x*" also smacks of later expansion, especially since it appears in only a small minority of the Amidah benedictions.

The point has also to be made that *seliḥot* as they developed in the post-talmudic period are not part of the statutory talmudic prayers. There are those that were recited on public fast days declared on the occasion of calamitous situations such as droughts, but these are not in the form that was later used (see *m. Taʿan* 2:1). That complex style evolved at the time of the early liturgical poems (*piyyuṭim*) and was used for a host of additional prayers attached to the central ones, or after the central ones, on fast days and to mark the lead-up to the New Year and for a few days afterwards, especially on Yom Kippur.[28]

If we may turn again to Saadia's tenth-century text, it may reasonably be argued on the basis of the considerations laid out above that some eight centuries earlier, perhaps in the decades immediately following the destruction of the Temple, the form of the benediction may have been considerably simpler. The parallelism, with its use of the stem מחל not documented as early as that

24. Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Period of the Tanna'im and Amora'im: Its Nature and Its Patterns* [Hebrew] (2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1966), 147–48; revised English edition, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (trans. R. Sarason; SJ 9; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977), 234–36.

25. Finkelstein, "Amidah," 10.

26. See Stefan C. Reif, *Problems with Prayers: Studies in the Textual History of Early Rabbinic Liturgy* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2006), 74–76.

27. Finkelstein ("Amidah") argues in this way but then attempts a precise dating of each prayer that seems to me to go beyond the available evidence.

28. On the early *seliḥot* poems, see Leon J.Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography: A Literary History* (London/Portland, Or.: Littman, 1998), 27, 60–61, 79–80, 125–30.

period, may not yet have occurred, and the vocative אבינו ("our father") may have been a development of the future.[29] The prototype that was used for incorporation into the Amidah may therefore have been no more than: סלח לנו כי חטאנו ברוך אתה ה' מרבה הסליחה.[30] This is not to say that such a prototype did not immediately take a variety of forms, simply that there was a popular version that was adopted by the rabbinic formulators. Nor is it perfectly clear what is meant by the phrase כי חטאנו. If the dominant theological view was that Jews were, as mortals, bound to sin, and God's tendency was to forgive them, the sense would be "forgive us in that we have sinned." Alternatively, if the view was already moving toward stressing repentance, that would explain the presence of a benediction on that theme immediately before the one on forgiveness, and the meaning would rather be "forgive us although we have sinned."

Unfortunately, as in so many other areas of Jewish history, there is little manuscript evidence to assist our inquiry between the second and ninth centuries. We are therefore required *faute de mieux* to look to the fragments from the Cairo Genizah to obtain some idea of the textual variations that were introduced from talmudic to geonic times.[31] My opinion is that these may well have occurred as early as the late tannaitic period, but one should also take into account the view championed by Ezra Fleischer and those who adhere to his preferred historical analysis, according to which many of these adjustments were the work of those who composed and recited the new genre of *piyyuṭim* in the late talmudic and subsequent periods.[32] Many of the relevant Genizah texts have been identified by Yehezkel Luger in his study of the Amidah and by Uri Ehrlich in the context of the joint Genizah liturgical project of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Cambridge University Library being run by him and by my Cambridge colleague Dr. Ben Outhwaite. They reveal some interesting textual developments vis-à-vis the text that is recorded by Saadia and that seems broadly to reflect the Babylonian rite.[33]

In some instances the words אבינו ("our father") and מלכנו ("our king") are

29. See nn. 9 and 10 above for the biblical Hebrew and lexicographical evidence.

30. Finkelstein ("Amidah," 147) offers המרבה לסלוח for the final two words, but I have omitted the definite article from the participle and made the word that it qualifies a substantive rather than an infinitive in order to match the concluding phrases of many of the other benedictions. See also the end of n. 36 below.

31. Ezra Fleischer, *Eretz-Israel Prayer and Prayer Rituals as Portrayed in the Geniza Documents* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988); Stefan C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000); and Menahem H. Schmelzer, "The Contribution of the Genizah to the Study of Liturgy and Poetry," *PAAJR* 63 [1997–2001] (2001): 163–79.

32. Ezra Fleischer, "On the Beginnings of Obligatory Jewish Prayer" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 59 (1990): 397–441; Stefan C. Reif, "Response to Ezra Fleischer's Article" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 60 (1991): 677–81; Ezra Fleischer, "Reply to Stefan Reif" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 60 (1991): 683–88.

33. Yehezkel Luger, *The Weekday Amidah in the Cairo Genizah* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Orhot, 2002), 86–91. I am grateful to Dr. Ehrlich and Dr. Outhwaite for kindly making this

omitted, replaced, or written above the line, perhaps confirming the supposition that they were not part of any prototype.[34] Where there is pointing, the word מחל or ומחל ("pardon") still widely occurs with *ḥolem* and not *pataḥ*.[35] In the concluding benedictory formula, both המרבה and ומרבה occur, and חנון is not always present, supporting the hypothesis that the primitive form may have been מרבה לסלוח.[36] There are also alternative explanatory additions before that benediction, similar to those found in other Amidah benedictions and beginning כי, and presumably copied from there. Examples of such additions are כי מוחל וסולח אתה ("for you provide pardon and forgiveness")[37] and כי [אל] טוב וסלח אתה ("for you are [divinely] good and forgiving").[38] The additional biblical phrase ורב חסד לכל קוראיך is also attested.[39] A final word is in order about the use of the word חנון and the possibility that it was theologically motivated and not simply a verbal whim. For a Jewish thinker anxious to stress that God's act of forgiveness is, as it were, above and beyond his divine duty, it would be natural to add a reference to his graciousness.[40]

What is generally assumed to be closer to the rite as practiced in pre-Crusader Palestine and imported by emigrants from there into Egypt ran along the following lines:[41]

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data available to me for this article, to Dr. Dan Davies for identifying the relevant manuscript fragments, and to Ellis Weinberger for other kind assistance.

34. See Cambridge University Library Genizah fragments (henceforth "CUL"), T-S 8H10.22, T-S H8.90, T-S NS 150.37, and T-S NS 152.35. Nevertheless, as Luger points out (*Weekday Amidah*, 87 n. 5), Moshe Weinfeld ("The Prayers for Knowledge, Repentance and Forgiveness in the 'Eighteen Benedictions'—Qumran Parallels, Biblical Antecedents, and Basic Characteristics" [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 48 [1979]: 187 n. 8) argues for the originality of אבינו. If he is correct, then its removal from some Genizah texts may reflect a hesitation to overemphasize God's fatherhood since this was a central notion in Christian theology and anathema to dominant Islamic conceptions of God.

35. For example, CUL, T-S NS 154.18. See the comments on Shabbethai and Baer cited towards the end of this article.

36. CUL, T-S 8H9.12, T-S 8H11.3, T-S 10H1.2, T-S 8H10.22, and Jewish Theological Seminary (henceforth "JTS"), Adler 2017, folio 9, all have ומרבה, while the alternative version המרבה occurs in CUL, T-S 8H10.6, T-S 8H24.5, T-S NS 154.120, T-S NS 230.96, T-S NS 278.151, and T-S AS 109.126. Interestingly, the word occurs with no prefix (מרבה) in CUL, T-S NS 195.77, while T-S 8H24.5 has no חנון in the concluding eulogy.

37. As in CUL, T-S 8H9.12.

38. CUL, T-S 8H10.6, T-S NS 154.18, T-S NS 157.193, T-S NS 159.112, T-S NS 230.19, T-S AS 108.57, and JTS Adler 2017, folio 9. The phrase occurs without the word לא in CUL, T-S NS 120.105.

39. CUL, T-S AS 109.126; the expansion derives from Ps 86:5.

40. See *Midrash Tehillim* 29.2 (ed. S. Buber; Vilna: Romm, 1891, 116b) for an early occurrence.

41. See J. Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service," *HUCA* 2 (1926): 416. Luger, *Weekday Amida*, 87, refers to an almost identical formulation as "נוסח ב."

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו לך מחה והעבר פשעינו מנגד עיניך כי רבים רחמיך בא"י המרבה לסלוח

> Forgive us, our Father, that we have sinned against you. Remove totally out of your sight our wrongdoing, for your mercies are manifold. You, Lord, are to be praised as the One who consistently grants forgiveness.

In order to explain the content of that version, a few variants require to be noted. The word לך is replaced by לפניך or omitted, suggesting that the verb חטאנו perhaps originally stood alone without such an indirect object, which may have been borrowed from such occurrences of the verb in the Hebrew Bible or in liturgical poetry, which was often composed under its influence.[42] The preposition על is inserted before the word פשעינו ("our wrongdoing"), as it occurs in the biblical Hebrew passage in Mic 7:18.[43] Indeed, this whole metaphor concerning the weight and removal of the wrongdoing is based on such biblical Hebrew passages as Ps 51:3; Lam 1:14; Mic 7:18; and Prov 19:11. The phrase מנגד עיניך ("out of your sight") also reflects an interest in adopting a biblical precedent, in this case a typical prophetic phrase, as in Isa 1:16; Jer 16:17; Amos 9:3; and Jonah 2:5, and the fact that there are instances of its omission would support the supposition that it represents the expansion of a simpler text.[44] In this rite, the explanatory phrase כי רבים רחמיך ("for your mercies are manifold") is a direct loan from Ps 119:156 (see also Dan 9:18). What we then have here, in sum, is an alternative form of parallel to the first phrase that demonstrates a greater and more literal tendency to "biblicize." At least one Genizah text, cited by Uri Ehrlich from the Antonin Collection in St. Petersburg, testifies to a conflation of these two alternatives and reads: סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו ומחול לנו מלכינו ומחה פשעינו מנגד עיניך.[45] There are other manuscripts that have an even more extensive conflation, namely,

42. CUL, T-S K27.18 and T-S NS 196.107; Judg 10:10; Jer 14:20; Dan 9:11, 15; *Siddur R. Saadia Gaon* (ed. Davidson et al.), in a *seliḥah* for Yom Kippur, 316; and many *seliḥot.* Manuscripts of the "Babylonian version" also have the word לך with either or both verbs in CUL, T-S 10H1.2 and T-S NS 235.172. The textual variations to be found with the word חטאנו in the Mekilta's comments on Exod 15:25 support my supposition of liturgical variation during the late talmudic and geonic periods; see *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, ed. J. Z. Lauterbach (3 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1933–35), 2:93; and ed. H. S. Horovitz and I. A. Rabin (Frankfurt-am-Main: Kauffmann, 1931), 156; *Mekhilta D'Rabbi Šim'on b. Jochai*, ed. J. N. Epstein and E. Z. Melamed (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1955), 104. I am again indebted to the "Maagarim" database (see n. 9 above) for important linguistic data in this connection. See now also Ezra Fleischer's posthumously published edition of Cambridge Genizah fragment T-S 20.57: "Megillah Qedumah," in *Higayon L'Yona: Studies in New Aspects in the Study of Midrash, Aggadah and Piyut in Honor of Professor Yona Fraenkel* (ed. J. Levinson, J. Elbaum, and G. Hazan-Rokem; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006), 529–49.

43. CUL, T-S K27.18.

44. CUL, T-S K27.18.

45. Uri Ehrlich, "An Early Version of the *Gevurot*, *Kedushat Ha-Shem*, and *Da'at* Blessings according to a New Fragment of a Palestinian Siddur" [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 73 (2005): 560, on

מחה והעבר פשעינו מנגד עיניך כי רבים רחמיך כי אל טוב וסלח אתה.[46] What is more, it is only the first phrase and the shorter version of the concluding benediction that all the versions have in common, again supporting our hypothesis about the prototype.

It will instantly be recalled that some thousand years ago the explanatory note immediately before the concluding benedictory formula occurred most commonly as כי [אל] טוב וסלח אתה ("for you are [divinely] good and forgiving") in the Babylonian rite that was destined to dominate most of the later liturgical rites, although there is also manuscript testimony to the phrase כי מוחל וסולח אתה ("for you provide pardon and forgiveness"). With the exception of the addition of substantives such as מלך and epithets such as מטיב, the common Babylonian formula is recorded in the rites of Persia, Byzantine, Italy, Spain, North Africa, Yemen, and France.[47] What is interesting is that the Ashkenazi (German) rite is the only one to adopt the alternative phrasing. It will contribute to this analysis of the religious ideas of the forgiveness benediction if an attempt is made to understand why this text was preferred by some liturgical commentators.

Once the parallel use of the stems סלח and מחל had become widespread, the next step was to treat the text as authoritative and to add to its theological exegesis. Just as in the biblical text, nothing was redundant, so it was assumed that the worshiper was not merely indulging in literary and aesthetic variation but making two distinct points.[48] It is well recognized that the Ashekanazi mystics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had a major impact on the overall content, precise wording, and spiritual message of the daily prayers.[49] Recorded in the name of one of its leading figures, Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (ca. 1165–1230 C.E.; called the "Roqeaḥ" after his main ethical treatise), is an interesting view of the meanings of the two stems used in our benediction (followed by my English translation):[50]

> סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו לא תיקנו אבינו כי אם בתשובה ובסלח וברכת כהנים, לפי שחייב האב ללמד לבנו לכך תיקנו השיבנו אבינו לתורתך, ברכינו אבינו כולנו כאחד באור פניך כי באור פניך נתת לנו ה' אלהינו תורת חיים, והאב סולח סרחון בנו [טור קטו], וישוב אל ה' וירחמיהו ואל אלהינו כי ירבה לסלוח [ישעיה נה:ז], וכתי' כרחם אב על בנים [תהלים

MS Evr. III B 995. See also *The Persian Jewish Prayer Book* (ed. Shelomo Tal; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi, 1980), 82 (MS, fol. 42b).

46. CUL, T-S NS 278.247, T-S NS 150.37, and T-S AS 102.132.

47. All conveniently cited by Finkelstein, "Amidah," 146; in *Otsar Hatefillot* (Vilna: Romm, 1923), 163b–164a; and by B. S. Jacobson, *Netiv Binah* (5 vols.; Tel Aviv: Sinai, 1968–83), 1:278–79.

48. Such developments are discussed in Reif, *Problems with Prayers*, 195–99.

49. See Joseph Dan, "The Emergence of Mystical Prayer," in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism* (ed. Joseph Dan and Frank Talmage; Cambridge, Mass.: Association for Jewish Studies, 1982), 85–120.

50. *Pirushey Siddur HaTefilah LaRokeach: A Commentary on the Jewish Prayer Book* (ed. M. Hershler and Y. A. Hershler; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Hershler, 1992), 1:333–34.

קג:יג], לכך סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו זהו שוגג כמו וחטאה בשגגה [ויקרא ה:טו], מחל לנו מלכינו כי פשענו במזיד במרד. ואומרים סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו מחל לנו מלכינו, לפי שכתו' ואם אב אני איה כבודי ואם אדונים אני איה מוראי [מלאכי א:ו]

Forgive us, our Father, that we have sinned: The composers of the Amidah benedictions included the word אבינו ("our father") only in the texts dealing with repentance, forgiveness, and the priestly benediction. Since a father is obligated to instruct his son in Torah, they included a metaphorical reference to fatherhood in the phrases *Restore us to your Torah* and *bless us all as one . . . because you have gifted us your eternal Torah*. If the son is rebellious, the father naturally forgives him as is clear from Isa 55:7 and Ps 103:13. Therefore the sixth benediction includes the phrase *Forgive us, our Father, that we have sinned,* which is a reference to the fact that we have sinned unintentionally (as in Lev 5:15), and the next phrase *Pardon us, our King, that we have done wrong* includes willful and rebellious wrongdoing. The whole text is therefore used to remind us of God's claim on us as our Father, as stated in Mal 1:6, *If I am your father where is my respect, if I am your master where is my reverence*?

Here, as in so many other cases, these mystics protected their suggested text by counting the number of its words and immediately offering explanations of that number's significance and relevance. Those in the Ashkenazi communities appear to have preferred the phrase כי מוחל וסולח אתה just before the benedictory conclusion because they believed that if the two kinds of forgiveness need to be requested here, with their independent senses, so too is it appropriate to mention, in the same language, that God is the provider of both of these. This explanation of the two Hebrew stems also occurs in the liturgical commentaries of Judah ben Yaqar, the teacher of Naḥmanides in twelfth-century Spain, of David ben Joseph Abudraham in that same country two centuries later, and of Yaḥya ben Ṣaliḥ in Yemen in the nineteenth century, indicating its wide dissemination and popularity. But the liturgical rites of the communities in which these three teachers wrote were not textually influenced in the same way as those of the Ashkenazim.

Like his pupil, Judah ben Yaqar tends to be somewhat diffuse, but the essence of what he writes tallies with the comments of Roqeaḥ with the addition of two fresh remarks.[51] In the first, he explains that the stem מחל refers to a situation where the wounded party expects to be asked for forgiveness; if the offender admits his fault, he should be forgiven. As far as סלח is concerned, even if we have done wrong, the arrangement is that God will forgive us. In both cases כי has the sense of "although." He then links the notion of "father" with one who seeks mercy, that is, undeserved good. Abudraham is much clearer and more succinct, stating that סליחה is what one may expect from a father when one has done wrong since a father is more likely to be automatically forgiving, while מחילה is

51. Judah ben Yaqar, *Perush haTefillot vehaBerakhot* (ed. Shmuel Yerushalmi; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Me'ore Yisra'el, 1968–69), 1:46.

what will be requested by one's equal or one's inferior who has in some way caused offense and cannot assume that he will be forgiven. He also stresses that כי can mean "although" and not "because," a theologically important point, as already suggested above.[52] Yaḥya makes similar points adding, very much along the lines of earlier comments by Judah ben Yaqar, that "forgiveness and unintentional sin are linked here with the notion of fatherhood because even willful wrongdoing is considered by a father to be unintentional. The link between פשע and rulership is made because to a ruler even unintentional error may be regarded as willful."[53]

By way of conclusion—and indeed of contrast—it is interesting to note the comments made by three later Ashkenazi liturgical authorities on the forgiveness benediction. Writing in early seventeenth-century Poland, and adumbrating many aspects of the *haskalah* approach of two hundred years later, Shabbethai Sofer of Przemysl offered no comment whatsoever on the meaning of the text but concentrated entirely on the issue of pointing מחל with a *pataḥ* or a *ḥolem*. As elsewhere, and in common with a number of predecessors, he argues his case on the basis of the vocalization of standard Biblical Hebrew, as it had become widespread in biblical codices, and cites Elijah Levita in support, characterizing those who opt for the rabbinic form as pseudo-grammarians (המראים את עצמם מדקדקים) and expressing surprise at Solomon Luria's preference for that form.[54] Seligmann Baer, in his liturgical text and commentary of 1868 makes a similar grammatical point, albeit in a somewhat more sophisticated and modern fashion, but he does add a remark about the exclusive use made by the Ashkenazim of the phrase כי מוחל וסולח אתה. He contrasts this with the alternative phraseology which he dubs the original text (נוסחא העקרית), as indeed preserved even by the Ashkenazim in their *seliḥot* poems. He thus reflects the kind of German-Jewish scholarly attitude of his day that so often saw the Sefardi precedent as somehow superior to the Ashkenazi one.[55] Early in the twentieth century Elbogen's classic study of the liturgy dealt with textual variation in the rites, seeming to betray something of a *tendenz* towards the Palestinian rather than the Babylonian rite, perhaps identifying what were then newly discovered variants as somewhat parallel to the liturgical adjustments being proposed in his own day by the Jewish

52. *Sefer Abudraham* (Warsaw: Schriftgisser, 1877), 56; *Sefer Abudraham Hashalem* (ed. S. A. Wertheimer; Jerusalem: Usha, 1963), 98.

53. *Tiklal* of Yaḥya b. Joseph Ṣaliḥ (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Ḥasid, 1894), 1:44b–45a.

54. On Shabbethai Sofer (ca. 1565–1635), see Stefan C. Reif, *Shabbethai Sofer and His Prayer-book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). For the reference in his commentary (MS, f. 36a), see סדור המדקדק הגדול בקי בכל חדרי התורה מה"ר שבתי סופר ב"ר יצחק מפרעמישלא תלמיד הלבוש, יוצא לאור ע"פ כ"י בית הדין בלונדון על ידי הרב יצחק סץ והרב דוד יצחקי [Hebrew] (ed. I. Satz and D. Yitschaki; 5 vols.; Baltimore: Ner Israel, 1987–2002), 1:143. On the slavish adoption of the biblical rather than the rabbinic forms, see Reif, *Shabbethai Sofer*, 29–38.

55. Seligman Baer, *Seder 'Avodat Yisra'el* (Rödelheim: Lehrberger, 1868), 90–91.

progressive movements. Be that as it may, he offers no comments on the theology of the benediction in its various textual forms.[56]

The nineteenth-century Orthodox rabbinic leader Samson Raphael Hirsch, on the other hand, in his posthumously published commentary on the traditional rabbinic prayers, attempts a definition of the two terms סליחה and מחילה. The former is "personal forgiveness granted so that the transgression that was committed may not permanently blight the relationship of the transgressor to the one against whom he has sinned." The latter is "objective pardon, the waiver of the punishment which the transgressor would have deserved." He also stresses that repentance has to precede forgiveness, of either sort, and that this accounts for the order of these two benedictions.[57] There is an interest here in theology that seems distinctly absent in the comments of Shabbethai, Baer, and Elbogen, but it is hardly novel. Almost a thousand years earlier, as should already be clear from previous comments in this study, similar remarks were being made and were leaving their impact on the structure of the liturgical text as well as on the meaning it was held to convey. The author of Eccl 1:9–10 cautioned us well about confidently defining instances of novelty. Today's worshiper, no less than contemporary students of liturgy, can do worse than to look back at the early sources.

56. Ismar Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (3rd ed.; Frankfurt-am-Main: Kauffman, 1931; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1962), 47–48; Hebrew edition, התפילה בישראל בהתפתחותה ההיסטורית (ed. J. Heinemann, I. Adler, A. Negev, J. Petuchowski, and H. Schirmann; Tel Aviv: Devir, 1972), 37; English edition, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (trans. and ed. R. P. Scheindlin; Philadelphia/Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1993), 42.

57. Samson R. Hirsch, *The Hirsch Siddur: The Order of Prayers for the Whole Year* (Jerusalem/New York: Feldheim, 1969; from the original German of Frankurt-am-Main: Kauffmann, 1895), 136–37; compare Jacobson, *Netiv Binah* (see n. 47 above), 1:314–15.

Confessing from A to Z: Penitential Forms in Early Synagogue Poetry

Laura Lieber

Introduction

Penitence might seem, at first, to be primarily an emotional experience: the recognition, and articulation of painful, damaging, and transgressive behaviors, either because such an experience is intrinsically worthy or in service of other goals, such as securing forgiveness or achieving repentance. Liturgical texts, so conceived, function to help penitents in these tasks: they name sins, articulate regret, and seek to repair the damaged relationship. This essay, however, focuses on what may be a less obvious aspect of penitential prayer in the Jewish tradition: aesthetics. Specifically, it seeks to understand the relationship between form and function in penitential synagogue poetry. Given that the liturgy contains prose, poetry, and works that fall in between—all participating in and reciprocally shaping conventions of penitence—what is the specific appeal of the poems?

Initially, this essay was conceived of as a thematic study—one that would focus on the theology, imagery, and language of repentance in the penitential poetry of the Jewish liturgy. Poetic form seemed to be merely the vehicle for conveying content. However, it quickly became apparent that the compositions most pertinent to this study were deeply conventional works on multiple levels: they present tropes of confessional language embedded within patterns of poetic structure. In short, penitential poetry exists at the intersection of two conventions. And if the basic themes and theology of rabbinic prose and synagogue poetry are shared, what makes the poetic corpus distinctive? The simplest answer is: form.

By focusing on methods of constructing penitential poems, this study will facilitate a more general exploration of the relationship between the aesthetics of poetry and the experience of prayer. Furthermore, consideration of form—precisely because of its conventionality and its engagement with other genres of writing—highlights the dynamic relationship between tradition and innovation in a ritual context. While the present study's focus will be on confessional and

penitential poems, defined by content as much as rhetoric, many of the following observations will hold true for other genres of *piyyuṭ* as well.[1]

The study of synagogue poetry (in Hebrew, *piyyuṭ*) is distinct from the study of the Bible, Second Temple literature, and rabbinics, although materials from all three of these areas are central to the study of *piyyuṭ*. While the roots of Jewish sacred poetry lie in the early centuries C.E., the earliest true *piyyuṭim* date to the Byzantine period, prior to the Muslim conquest of the Land of Israel; the first prayer books appear somewhat later. Although much remains to be learned about the early synagogue and its literatures, the fact that *piyyuṭim* were created for communal use as part of liturgical worship seems clear. Compared to "liturgies" such as those in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah or the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars know a fair bit about the original use, the life settings, and even the authors of many of the poetic texts. Given the period in which liturgical poetry came into being and flourished, *piyyuṭim* are best understood in relationship to both biblical and post-biblical Jewish writings, particularly midrash; indeed, many of the early synagogue poems were composed in a period when the major works of rabbinic literature were still crystallizing.[2] At the same time, because the present topic is liturgical *poetry*, the extensive prose traditions that may precede or be contemporary with the poems being studied here have been largely excluded from examination. Also, unlike most of the works considered in the first two volumes of this series, several of the poems presented in this paper are still in use as a part of contemporary Jewish liturgies. Thus, while this essay concentrates on the early periods of *piyyuṭ* (roughly the fifth to the tenth centuries C.E.), it will occasionally cast a long glance into the future.

Reflecting these volumes' overarching focus on penitential prayer, the poems examined here are *seliḥot* (prayers seeking pardon) and *vidduyim* (confessions); works from related genres, particularly *qinot* (laments), have been excluded. Likewise, questions about the early liturgical context—the origins of the *Seder*

1. One of the first major modern works of scholarship in the field of *piyyuṭ* studies, Leopold Zunz's *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters* (Berlin: J. Springer, 1855), began as a study of penitential prayer in the context of the High Holidays, particularly the *seliḥot,* but the very commonality of poetic form led Zunz to turn the work into a general history of *piyyuṭ*.

2. The bibliography of *piyyuṭ* studies is too extensive to list here, and most works are written in Hebrew. In English, the most accessible comprehensive work is Leon J. Weinberger's *Jewish Hymnography: A Literary History* (London: Littman, 1998). In relation specifically to penitential prayer, Michael D. Swartz and Joseph Yahalom have recently published several of the earliest *piyyuṭim* for Yom Kippur in a bilingual edition, *Avodah: An Anthology of Ancient Poetry for Yom Kippur* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005). In Hebrew, the landmark works include Ezra Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975); Aharon Mirsky, *The Piyyut* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991); and Menahem Zulay, *The Land of Israel and Its Poetry* (ed. Ephraim Chazzan; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995). Key rabbinic sources shedding light on the origins of penitential rites in which poems are framed include, but are not limited to, *m. Taʿan.* 2:1–4; *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* 23:2; *b. Taʿan.* 25b; *b. Yoma* 87b; *b. Roš Haš.* 17b; *Midr. Lev. Rab.* 3:3; *m. Maʿaś. Š.* 5:10–13; *m. Yoma* 3:8.

Haseliḥot itself, in particular—must be deferred, as they exceed the scope of this study. Many of the following observations about penitential and confessional poetry hold true for other forms of *piyyuṭ* as well—that is part of their "conventionality"—but because penitential poems are among the earliest genres, the features discussed here are among the oldest and most essential to the field as a whole. Three crucial aspects of synagogue poetry particularly relevant to penitential poetry will be explored in this study; the examples and illustrations of specific features will draw on the penitential poetic tradition, even though none of the phenomena is exclusively "penitential." First, the function that common poetic devices may serve will be considered; second, the basic development of the most important forms within the traditions of synagogue poetry will be delineated through examination of both forms that are truly poetic and those that, while not true poetry, have significant poetic features; finally, the patterns by which these poems were (and continue to be) adopted into the synagogue service will be discussed. Before turning directly to this material, however, a brief introduction to the larger world of the *piyyuṭim* is in order.

Texts in Context

Although the focus of this essay is form, form bears directly on creation of meaning. The combination of penitential themes and liturgical context ultimately determines the classification of a particular *piyyuṭ* as "penitential"; there is no single or specific poetic form associated with penitence. Thus, as a preface to the following analysis of poetic techniques, it is important to say a few words about the functions and origins of the formal structures most important to this study.

Many of the structures typical of penitential *piyyuṭim* reflect a tension perhaps best understood as "contained exhaustiveness." That is, though our sins be too many to reckon, these poems attempt to do just that, struggling to strike a balance between extremes.[3] Some forms, such as those consisting of strings of linked or adapted quotations, are open-ended, inviting the addition of new material on the model of the extant lines. Others, like acrostics, are more inher-

3. Other topics, such as praise of the divine, are likewise subject to this tension; such techniques suit the penitential context but are not limited to it. Excessively lengthy praise of God, for example, is criticized by R. Hanina in *b. Ber.* 33a: "A certain [prayer-leader] went down [before the ark, to lead the Prayer] in the presence of R. Hanina and said, 'O God, the great, mighty, awesome, majestic, powerful, awful, strong, fearless, sure and honored.' He waited until [the prayer-leader] had finished, and when he had finished he said to him, 'Have you concluded all the praise of your Master? Why do we want all this? Even with these three [*viz*. "great, mighty, and awesome"] that we do say, had not Moses our Master mentioned them in the Torah [Deut 10:17] and had not the Men of the Great Synagogue come and inserted them in the *tefillah*, we should not have been able to mention them, but you say all these and still go on! It is as if an earthly king had a million *denarii* of gold, and someone praised him as possessing silver ones. Would it not be an insult to him?'" The tension between concision and exhaustion is a hallmark of the liturgical tradition in Judaism.

ently fixed, although the length of Ps 119 reminds us that "fixed" need not mean "brief." Still other structures, like historical précis, which attempt to summarize the sinfulness of Israel and/or the compassion of God's response, occupy a kind of middle ground: on the one hand, poets could (and did) add more historical figures in an attempt to create comprehensiveness, but on the other hand, excess could be a quick path to tedium, if not obscurity. The surviving works that we now possess seem to indicate the natural limits of such rubrics.

Many of the formal features of *piyyuṭim* recall biblical models. Acrostics, for example, are a common device in both biblical poetry and postbiblical compositions; the use of acrostics in the book of Lamentations, in particular, may explain the frequency of their presence in *seliḥot* (penitential) poetry (as well as postbiblical *qinot*).[4] "Historical précis" which confess the sinful history of Israel, meanwhile, strongly recall Ps 106. Many penitential *piyyuṭim* have refrains, a formal development anticipated by Ps 107, which asserts multiple times: "In their adversity, they cried to the Eternal and He saved them from their troubles." And, as noted by others in these volumes, the prose prayers and rituals of Lev 16 and Neh 9, among others, were also important sources of formulaic language and imagery. In many ways, Jewish liturgical poems (like other forms of postbiblical writing) employ key biblical structures but in an intensified and distilled fashion. At the same time, *piyyuṭim* sometimes resemble terse distillations of rabbinic *prose* rhetoric and traditions in both form and content. As will be demonstrated below, *piyyuṭim* are best understood as the offspring of both the Bible and methods of studying the Bible that we think of as "rabbinic."

Development of Forms

Because *seliḥot* are among the oldest attested forms of synagogue poetry, the question of their origins is really a question of the origins of *piyyuṭim* in general. No definitive statements can be made about precisely when or why these poems developed, but the fact that rabbinic Hebrew coined a new term for liturgical poetry—*piyyuṭ*, from the same Greek root that gives us the English word "poetry"—suggests that the Rabbis themselves recognized this kind of writing as innovative, distinct from the biblical *širim* and *mizmorim*. To help orient readers new to this field to the specific works discussed below, a brief, albeit highly simplified, overview of their possible origins may prove helpful.[5]

4. Daniel Goldschmidt, *Seder Haseliḥot* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1965), xiii.

5. In addition to the works cited above, see also (in English) Jefim Schirmann, "Hebrew Liturgical Poetry and Christian Hymnology," *JQR* 44 (1953): 123–61; and (in Hebrew) Joseph Yahalom, *Poetry and Society in the Galilee in Late Antiquity* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame'uchad, 1999); Aharon Mirsky, *Yesodei tsurot Hapiyyut* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985); A. M. Haberman, *Toledot Hapiyyut veHashirah* (Givat Ram: Massada, 1972); Shalom Spiegel, "On the Language of the Piyyutim," *Hadoar* 43/23 (1962–63): 497–400. Again, this bibliography is only a partial listing.

Today, the term *piyyuṭ* is generally reserved for Hebrew poems embellishing the statutory liturgy or other rituals. They may be added to or substituted for fixed prayers. The earliest *piyyuṭim* were composed in the Land of Israel during the Byzantine period, and they are very much a Palestinian-Jewish phenomenon at first. The Babylonian authorities initially resisted liturgical variation (including but not limited to *piyyuṭ*), although eventually *piyyuṭim* distinguished the rites of *all* pre-modern Jewish communities.[6] The first true *piyyuṭim* are dated to the fourth or fifth century C.E. (the "anonymous" or "preclassical" period); they were written for the High Holidays and communal fast days, and the *payyeṭan* (liturgical poet) Yose ben Yose is the only named poet from this era. By the mid-sixth–eighth century C.E. (the "classical" period, which ends with the Muslim conquest of the Land of Israel), the Sabbath and festival liturgies were being augmented with complex and lengthy compositions; this is the period of the early masters, including Yannai, Qillir, Yehudah, and Pinhas ha-Kohen. During the Middle Ages and later, poems were composed to embellish almost all rituals, including circumcisions, weddings, funerals, and domestic observances. Every ritual became a poetic opportunity.

Medieval scholars typically explained the creation of *piyyuṭim* as a subversive response to external religious oppression. For example, Pirqoi ben Baboi (early ninth century, Babylon) recalls a tradition that *piyyuṭim* arose after the emperor Justinian prohibited recitation of the statutory prayers. This may reflect an understanding of Justinian's prohibition of "*deuterōsis*" in Novella 146 of 529 C.E. Rabbi Judah ben Barzillai of Barcelona (late eleventh century) taught that this poetry arose "at a time of forced apostasy," when teaching Torah was prohibited; the precise situation he had in mind is unknown.[7] According to such "traditional" understandings, the dual liturgical and didactic-exegetical functions of the poems are primary; artistry—that is, form—simply enabled them to work without detection. However, while persecution may have increased the *importance* of *piyyuṭ*, transforming and intensifying its pedagogic and polemical potential, the roots of Jewish liturgical poetry are enmeshed with the origins of the statutory liturgy itself, and issues of aesthetics and tradition are of primary, not secondary, importance.[8]

6. For the most thorough and thoughtful discussion of the tensions in Judaism between liturgical innovation and ritual law, see Ruth Langer, *To Worship God Properly: Tensions between Liturgical Custom and Halakhah in Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1998).

7. For a presentation of these "traditional" views in a convenient location and in English, together with the text of Justinian's novella, see Paul Kahle, *Cairo Geniza* (London: British Academy, 1947), 19–35.

8. It is impossible to determine a *terminus a quo* for *piyyuṭ*, but its origins are entangled within the origins of the statutory liturgy as a whole. Joseph Heinemann generally regarded *piyyuṭ* as an organic development rooted in diverse liturgical and literary impulses as well as ritual traditions. Ezra Fleischer, on the other hand, viewed *piyyuṭim* as a rebellion against an

As for the authors of *piyyuṭim*, it is clear that they were profoundly learned, steeped in both biblical texts and traditions of interpretation. The *payyeṭan*'s place in Palestinian Jewish society remains largely unknown; while it seems likely that it was a professional position of some kind, at least in some cases, most reconstructions risk anachronism. It is possible that communities that lacked their own *payyeṭanim* commissioned poems for special events or holidays; and it seems clear that *piyyuṭim* (or *payyeṭanim*?) circulated widely. In any case, old *piyyuṭim* were sufficiently popular that they were often preserved, copied, revised, and updated centuries after their original composition. This transmission history often makes it difficult to reconstruct chronologies.

In terms of frequency of recitation of penitential poems, we see a clear trend toward maximalism. The earliest *seliḥot* were probably written for fast days, which would have been called only when urgently needed. Yose ben Yose, the first poet whose name we know, composed poems (including two discussed below) for recitation on the High Holidays—a singular but predictable occurrence in the year. Poets of the next generation composed penitential poems for specific, fixed occasions—the Sabbaths of Rebuke prior to the Ninth of Av (the traditional anniversary of the destruction of the First and Second Temples), in particular. Over time, however, the penitential season was broadened, and by the Middle Ages lengthy *seliḥot* rites—including the *seliḥot* poems—took place as part of a lead-up to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur during the previous month (Elul). Eventually—through the rituals of *taḥanun* (daily supplicatory prayers), *yom kippur qatan* (the sixteenth-century Lurianic kabbalistic custom of observing the last day of each month as a penitential fast day), and so forth—penitential poems, including works originally written for more limited contexts (e.g., *'abinu malkenu*, "Our Father, Our King"), were added to the daily liturgy. As occasional poems moved into the daily service, they left openings for new High Holiday and Elul creations. Thus, the penitential prayers exemplify the typical patterns of ad hoc for mutations becoming common and fluid texts transforming into a fixed liturgical canon.

With regard to form, general hallmarks of early *piyyuṭim* include the use of metonymy and marked rhythm. The *'aleinu* prayer—an excerpt from a lengthy *piyyuṭ* composed for the Rosh Hashanah service that is now part of the daily service—offers a good example of this style. God is referred to as *'adon hakol* ("Lord of All") and *yoṣer berešit* ("the worker of creation"), and every line has a

existing fixed liturgy (especially the Amidah). For a summary of the Heinemann and Fleischer approaches to liturgical history (in English), see Ruth Langer, "Revisiting Early Rabbinic Liturgy: the Recent Contributions of Ezra Fleischer," *Prooftexts* 19 (1999): 179–94; Ezra Fleischer's response, "On the Origins of the *'Amidah*: A Response to Ruth Langer," *Prooftexts* 20 (2000): 380–84; and Ruth Langer's response, "Considerations of Method: A Response to Ezra Fleischer," *Prooftexts* 20 (2000): 384–87. The process was probably more complex than either Heinemann or Fleischer's work would indicate. Much work remains to be done in this area of research.

strong four-beat rhythm: i.e., *'Al**ei**nu lešа**be**aḥ la-'ad**on** ha-**kol** // la**tet** gedu**lah** le-yo**ser** bereš**it***. Such features may be the only identifying characteristics of an early poem (which may otherwise appear to be—and be printed as—prose); works of this period are generally unrhymed, although (as we will see below) certain patterns anticipate and may have directly led to the invention of Hebrew rhyme. By around the sixth century C.E., end rhyme had become common, and the poems became both lengthier and more formally complex. Eventually, internal rhyme and complicated embedded acrostics developed. In terms of content, from the earliest periods, allusions to rabbinic traditions as well as dense biblical intertextuality are definitive of the genre.

Regarding the specific development of penitential and confessional poetry, three formal features merit special scrutiny: the relationship of the penitential *piyyuṭim* to *seliḥot* compositions, particularly those that employ "the list" as a major organizational feature; their use of acrostics and other structural devices; and their intertextuality with rabbinic sources and other liturgical texts. All these features display the tensions between tradition and innovation that typify Jewish liturgy, and we will shortly see how the works of one era become the formal basis for poetry of subsequent generations.

The Love of the List

Seliḥot, as a distinctive subgenre of *piyyuṭim*, can be dated to the fourth or fifth century or earlier.[9] The early *seliḥot piyyuṭim* share a certain aesthetic with the collections of biblical verses that formed the core of the original *seliḥot* service (which are not technically *piyyuṭim* at all but are linked to poetry by their formalism) as well as other compositions structured as lists, such as historical précis.[10]

Liturgical anthologies of verses are carefully ordered compositions, usually loosely unified through the repetition of key theme words either embedded within the verse or at the beginning (e.g., "great," "merciful," "holy," or "remember"). The interconnections between the verses range from the simple to the intri-

9. Much depends on when one dates the poet Yose ben Yose; his poetry presumably builds on developments that predate his own period. See Aharon Mirsky, *Piyyutei Yose ben Yose* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1991); Mirsky places Yose in the fifth century (16). For his analysis of the formal relationship between the *seliḥot* poems and other literatures, see the introduction (58–61). See also Mirsky's *Yesodei tsurot Hapiyyut*, cited above. It is not yet clear whether the various verse-anthology texts (*seliḥot*, *tokehot*, etc.) crystallized after the rabbinic prayer texts were, in some sense, already fixed, or whether they developed in parallel to the statutory liturgy.

10. My thinking on this issue has greatly benefited from Ruth Langer, "Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers: Their History and Function," in *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into Its History and Interaction* (ed. Albert Gerhart and Clemens Leonhard; Jewish and Christian Perspectives 15; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 63–92. Langer's terminology of "cento" and "florilegium" for distinguishing varieties of verse anthologies is particularly useful when such patterns are studied in greater depth than here.

cate.[11] Specific selections may include verses from the chapters of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah that have received much attention in the two previous volumes of this series, as well as verses from the Pentateuch, but the book of Psalms is the single most quoted source. The Thirteen Attributes (Exod 34:6–7) and other verses that assert or invoke the success of penance also play a critical role in the rite and are also quoted repeatedly.

These compositions are not *piyyuṭim*; the creativity of their compilation is primarily editorial, meaning that the brilliance of these works comes from the selection, adaptation, and juxtaposition of already extant texts. Works composed in this fashion were fluid and could vary in length. Strictly speaking, these fundamental portions of the *seliḥot* rites fall outside the purview of this paper. Nevertheless, certain features of some of these works resemble *piyyuṭim* in important and suggestive ways. For example, the heavy repetition of single words, particularly in fixed positions, may offer a clue to the origins of rhyme in Hebrew poetry or reflect a related aesthetic; similar patterns of intensive repetition are familiar from some of the earliest poetic works, notably the Shofar service of Yose ben Yose, and this technique continues to be used in the works of later *payyeṭanim*, such as Yannai, in addition to true end rhyme.[12]

The simple assemblies of verses are the most basic version of the "listing" aesthetic. A more complex variant of this kind of composition involves prefacing anthologized *seliḥot* verses with brief (prose) introductions. Because they create a physical space around the quotation, in some ways these verses resemble units of early *piyyuṭim* (the units of which often conclude with a collection of verses) but with an emphasis on the verses rather than on the framing. These introductions can be as simple as "as it is written by the hand of Your prophet" prefacing a quotation from Isaiah (and strongly resembling the prefaces to quotations found in *piyyuṭim*).[13] Or they can be more substantial, such as: "Restore our exile and deal mercifully with us, as it is written . . . ," which introduces a quotation on the theme of the ingathering of exiles.[14] In both these examples, the root ש-ו-ב (an important

11. See Joseph Heinemann, "Piyyut-Forms of Temple Origin," in idem, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (trans. Richard S. Sarason; SJ 9; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1977), 139–55, for the connection between *hošanot* and *seliḥot*. Stefan C. Reif (*Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 82) suggests that the *hošanot* and *seliḥot* examined by Heinemann be regarded as "predecessors of *piyyut* rather than their earliest example." Even this chronology is not firm, however. See Langer, "Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers," for an analysis of the text, "*va'anaḥnu lo' neda*'" and other more complex centos and florilegia. It is important to note that this style of composition is not limited to penitential works; for example, "*mah ṭobu*," commonly sung as a hymn in modern synagogues, is actually such a collection of verses.

12. See Aharon Mirsky, "The Beginnings of Rhyme," in idem, *The Piyyut* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 302–14. For Yose ben Yose's Shofar service, see Mirsky, *Piyyutei Yose ben Yose*, 1991), 93–117.

13. Goldschmidt, *Seder Haseliḥot*, 13.

14. Ibid., 11.

root in penitential contexts!) anticipates the kind of repetition that will lead to rhyme, while the introduction—presenting its own original content—resembles the form of early *piyyuṭim*, where the "prefaces" are replaced with poems, and the verses become clusters of proof texts that merely reinforce. The precise relationship between the verse-anthology *seliḥot* compositions and *piyyuṭim* are far from clear; it is tempting to see the word chaining and prefaces as forms that anticipate true liturgical poetry, but the dating of the works suggests that these two styles of writing were contemporary with one another rather than sequential. Indeed, both may be true: the anthologies of verses may, as a form, predate *piyyuṭim* but they may have persisted into the period of *piyyuṭ*, as well. At the very least, *piyyuṭ* and verse-anthology *seliḥot* reflect roughly contemporary expressions of common impulses, perhaps in some way still influencing each other but in far from simple ways.

One final feature of these anthological compositions should be considered before we turn our attention to more overtly poetic forms. In certain limited instances, the anthologizers of verses *altered* biblical quotations to suit the communal context of the litanies. In particular, we find instances where the singular forms in biblical verses have been changed to plural. For example, Ps 19:15 is changed from "May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart" to "May the words of **our** mouths and the meditations of **our** hearts"; similarly, the singulars in Ps 51:3 become plurals, resulting in the pseudo quotation, "Do not cast **us** away from before You; do not take Your holy spirit from **us**."[15] This kind of adaptation (usually associated with the earlier stages of liturgical development) indicates that the composers of these lists felt free to alter the language of the Bible in a new context, transforming quotations into allusions—a hallmark of synagogue poetry as well.[16]

Piyyuṭim participate in—and may have emerged out of—this kind of complex, intertextual, allusive "listing" aesthetic. An example of this formal relationship can be seen in the *piyyuṭim* which have their roots in the historically oriented, litany-like petitions recorded in *m. Taʿan.* 2:4 as well as in the poetic traditions of the historical psalms, Pss 104–106. The mishnaic text is formally more sophisticated than a simple anthology of verses. It is not a series of biblical quotations but rather a creative petition based on references to biblical episodes when God responded to the prayers of Abraham, the generation of the Exodus, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, Jonah, David, and Solomon.[17] Each episode of divine responsiveness is introduced by formulaic language: "May He who answered . . .

15. Ibid., 11.

16. See *b. Ber.* 11b. In "Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers," Langer notes that context can also change the sense of a biblical verse; she notes how God's first-person self-description in Isa 45:7 ("forming light and creating darkness") becomes a third-person description of divine attributes in the first blessing before the morning Shema.

17. The full text is cited above in Richard Sarason's article in the present volume (see pp. 5–6). It is interesting that Elijah and Jonah disrupt the historical order of the list.

answer you and hearken to the voice of your crying this day." A specific blessing (for example, "Blessed are You who remembers forgotten things" and "Blessed are You who hears the blowing of the shofar") follows each episode of the sacred history. The prayer recounted in the Mishnah is, again, not "*piyyuṭ*" per se, but its intensive formal repetition blurs the line between poetry and prose. This model could be considered a "semi-poem," in that with only minor tweaking, this style of writing can be distilled into the rhetoric of the classical *piyyuṭim*. The line between these compositions and true *piyyuṭ* can easily become blurred, as the following example will show.

In *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, the oldest known Jewish prayer book (the earliest material dates to the ninth century C.E.), a variety of compositions on the mishnaic model can be found. In these semi-poetic creations, however, the introductory formula is radically shortened compared to the mishnaic parallel; this terseness heightens the resemblance to poetry (see Appendix, 1a).[18] For example, this liturgy preserves a variety of works structured on the framework of כענית . . . ענגו ("as You answered . . . answer us") or, in an Aramaic variant, . . . דעני ענינן.[19] Ashkenazic *seliḥot* rituals preserve similarly structured works, such as כענית . . . יענגו ("As You answered . . . answer us"; see Appendix, 1b and 1c).[20] These compositions blur the boundary between poetry and prose; they lack meter, rhyme, and metonymy, but their overt patterning and terse brevity distinguish them from "simple" prose.

These intensely formal structures could easily become poetry. In the Eastern rites, we have a *seliḥah* for Yom Kippur attributed to Saadia Gaon (ninth–tenth century) in which the first line of each stanza introduces the historical figure while the second line contains the phrase "answer us (ענגו) . . . / as You answered (כענית)" (see Appendix, 2).[21] This work is a true poem—it contains a variety of poetic features, including an acrostic, internal rhyme, end rhyme—built on the framework of the earlier forms. When this poem is read in the context of the earlier *seliḥot* that it so closely resembles, a certain larger pattern emerges quite clearly. A singular organizing principle—in this case, the historical précis—for all its variations, provided a fruitful mechanism for confessing Israel's history of transgressions while also emphasizing God's redemptive involvement with the

18. These "semi-poetic" creations strongly resemble the *rahit* ("runner") unit of the Sabbath *piyyuṭ*-series known as a *qedušta*, which embellishes the Amidah. The *rahit* is usually unrhymed and distinguished by intensely repetitive forms.

19. *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. Daniel Goldschmidt; Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1971), 157–58; this work will be cited below as *SRA*. Amram b. Sheshna lived in the ninth century C.E.; however, the rite that he delineated in the course of a responsum was subject to later additions and alterations, making individual texts within the *Siddur* difficult to date.

20. Goldschmidt, *Seder Haseliḥot*, 16.

21. *Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon* (ed. Israel Davidson, Simha Assaf, and B. Issachar Joel; Jerusalem: Mekizei Nirdamim, 1941), 311; hereafter *SRSG*. This poem also contains an alphabetic acrostic.

nation. In some ways, Saadia's petitionary penitential poem resembles Pss 106 and 107, mediated by mishnaic rhetorical tropes and translated into a payyetanic aesthetic.

In general, these borderline poetic works are much longer than their biblical or mishnaic progenitors and more expansive in their historical scope. The framework is flexible and readily accommodates the introduction of additional historical figures (Hezekiah, Elisha, Esther and Mordechai, Daniel and friends, Ezra and Nehemiah, among others); generically titled groups ("the righteous, pious, and pure," "the poor," "the embittered," and "all who cry out to You," for example) blur the scope of the list into the present moment. In formal terms, these compositions occupy a position between poetry and prose; they are neither rhymed nor strictly rhythmic, and yet their terse, repetitive qualities (evident when these works are compared to *'abinu malkenu* and *'al ḥeṭ'*, or the mishnaic text, on the one hand, or Saadia's *piyyuṭ* on the other) brings them close to poetry. In terms of content, the concepts of ancestral merit and covenantal fidelity play prominent roles in all of these poems; what changes over time is the increasingly poetic presentation of the familiar motifs. The mishnaic text is similar to poetry; Saadia's composition, clearly descended from that mishnaic model, *is* poetry.

This "listing" aesthetic, with its intensive repetitiveness, is not limited to works with a historical focus. A final example will show how this intensely patterned aesthetic permeates penitential *piyyuṭim* and, in some ways, defines the genre of liturgical poetry (reflecting, as it does, an intensification of rhetorical forms not limited to poetry). This brief, fascinating plea to intercessory angels, "You who elicit mercy (מכניסי רחמים)," found in *Seder Rav Amram*, the *Siddur of Rav Saadia,* and the penitential rites of Eastern Europe, shares formal characteristics with the previously cited examples, this time in a nonhistorical structure (see Appendix, 3).[22] Where verse anthologies, for example, are often knit together by means of repeated words, this poem is structured entirely on a very tightly patterned repetitive structure. The opening line, for example, is built entirely on the verb "to enter," with a derived meaning, "to elicit" [23] (מכניס/נכנס) and the noun "mercy" (רחמים): מכניסי רחמים. הכניסו רחמינו. לפני בעל הרחמים ("You who elicit mercy / Elicit for us mercy / before the Lord of Mercy"). In terms of form, this brief piece reflects the aesthetics of preclassical *piyyuṭim* (regular rhythm, verbal patterning, metonymy, and absence of true rhyme) and some classical *piyyuṭim*.[24] Indeed, the fact that this four-line *piyyuṭ* prefaces a brief prose prayer

22. *SRA*, 159; *SRSG*, 357; Goldschmidt, *Seder Haseliḥot*, 18. The fact that this poem is a prayer to angels rather than the deity may account for its absence from Sephardic rites (and its frequent omission in many Ashkenazic rites). See, for example, Maimonides' condemnation of prayer directed to angels in his introduction to *m. Sanhedrin*, ch. 10.

23. Literally, "to bring in" rather than "to bring out"—the angels are "bringing in" God's attribute of mercy!

24. This piece resembles the unit called a *silluq* ("transition") in the Sabbath *qedušta*; the *silluq* is usually some form of patterned prose.

makes the resonances with the *silluq* form particularly intriguing. At the same time, the tidiness of the structural conceit resembles a highly distilled manifestation of the other "listing" devices. The content of the poem, meanwhile, echoes a nonbiblical tradition about prayer preserved in *Exod. Rab.* 21:4, "When they [all Israel] have all finished [praying], the angel appointed over prayers collects all the prayers that have been offered in all the synagogues, weaves them into garlands and places them upon the head of God."

The *piyyuṭ* "מכניסי רחמים" does not attempt to biblicize either in form or content; instead, it creatively employs metonymy and translates aggadic motifs particularly relevant to the conceptualization of prayer in order to reflect the poet's specific context and aesthetics. The formal patterning—the cumulative effect of endings, patterns, rhythms, and so forth—adds a kind of rhetorical power to the experience of reciting the poem that goes beyond the content of the words, however. The repetitions and interconnections are powerful in the verse anthologies and semi-poetic texts, but this power is intensified in the true *piyyuṭim*.

The example of "מכניסי רחמים" suggests how the formal impulse of the list (from the concatenation of biblical verses that share common concerns and vocabulary to innovative poetic works that rely on allusion rather than quotation) creates not only common themes but shared rhetorical patterns. The first examples considered saw this patterning expressed in terms of editorial creativity—the ability to select and juxtapose biblical quotations on the basis of shared vocabulary and themes to create a new composition. The next category consisted of similarly linked verses prefaced by introductions that intensified the sense of unity and intentionality of the composition. Then we considered works based on the ritual text of *m. Taʿan.* 2:4, which does not quote biblical texts but alludes to biblical episodes. These works blur the boundary between prose and poetry, particularly through their intensive use of repetition and pattern and through their use of allusion as well as quotation. Finally, we considered true poetic litanies, which may be rooted not only in biblical texts but also in rabbinic aggadah, but which stand out primarily for the formal features they share with the other forms. Rarely does one form of creativity supplant another; instead, most of the *seliḥot* rituals of Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Mizrahi Judaism preserve texts in all these forms, from strings of verses to creative poems, making strictly chronological conclusions difficult to draw. A conservative tradition, the penitential rituals combine old and new, side by side, neither giving up its place for the other.

Acrostics and Other "Limiting" Devices

The "list" is an open-ended patterning device; new verses can be added, new historical figures introduced, new pleas to the intercessory angels invoked. Patterns define the limits of the individual lines, but what restrains the actual length of the poems? In some cases, formal devices effect such constraints. One such feature of the early *seliḥot*, familiar from biblical poetry, is the acrostic. In general, acrostics

can serve a variety of functions; in short works, they may simply be mnemonic devices; in more complex and lengthy poems, they also help to establish formal boundaries on potentially limitless subjects. In postbiblical poetry, nonalphabetic acrostics and acrostic-like structures also develop. Included among the later formal developments will be signature acrostics and poems that take established texts—for example, the *'ašamnu* confession—and construct new poems on the basis of these self-limiting frames.

In terms of penitential alphabetic acrostics, the *'ašamnu*, first attested in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, is the archetype.[25] The *'ašamnu*, or "short confession," forms the core of the Yom Kippur confessional liturgy to the present day; in formal terms, it is between poetry and prose, consisting primarily of trisyllabic words sharing the first-person common plural suffix, *-nu* (*a-šam-**nu**, ba-gad-**nu**, ga-zal-**nu***), a strong rhythm interrupted on four occasions by the addition of a second word of two syllables (*dibarnu do-fi, tapalnu ša-qer, ya'aṣnu ra'[-ot]*, and *qišinu 'o-ref*). The rhythm and repeated sounds are suggestive of poetry, resulting in a semi-poetic effect, parallel to the phenomenon in the previous category. The *'ašamnu* is not quite poetry, but it is more than prose.

Like other forms of biblical and postbiblical writing, *piyyuṭim* employ alphabetic acrostics.[26] The acrostic is a flexible device and is certainly not limited to penitential poetry, but it is so pervasive in this context that it is still worth examining briefly, before considering more complicated patterning devices.

Two poems by Yose ben Yose (fourth–fifth century C.E.?) provide rich examples for this present study, indicating important aspects of poetic development in terms of both form and content. This author is the best representative (and only named poet) of the so-called "anonymous" period of payyetanic creativity. Both the *seliḥah* "אמנם אשמנו" and the confessional *viddui* "אז לראש תתנו" employ alphabetic acrostics as a major structuring device (see Appendix, 4 and 5).[27] However, Yose's poems display more complex formal features, as well. A brief description of the forms of these early *piyyuṭim* will make the differences from the *'ašamnu* obvious. The first poem, "אמנם אשמנו," consists of four-line stanzas of two stichs each, two words to a stich, with a quadruple acrostic: the

25. *SRA*, 153; this text contains the two-syllable addition "*ra'ot*" in place of the more familiar "*ra*" of most modern versions.

26. *Ruth Rab.* 6:2 (see also *Qoh. Rab.* 7:16) mentions acrostics as a type of song: "My father, Abuyah, was one of the notable men of his generation, and at my circumcision he invited all the notables of Jerusalem, including Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua. And after they had eaten and drunk, they sang, some ordinary songs and others alphabetical acrostics." Nor are such acrostics limited to Jewish or Hebrew poetry of this period. Schirmann notes that, in early Christian poetry, Greek acrostics were written on a structure going from *alpha* to *tau* (i.e., *alef* to *tav*) rather than the expected *alpha* to *omega* ("Christian Hymnography," 147–48); presumably these drew on biblical (Hebrew) models.

27. These poems are found in Mirsky's *Piyyutei Yose ben Yose*, cited above. "אמנם אשמנו" is on 118–129; "אז לראש תתנו" on 219–21.

first four lines beginning with *alef*, the second four with *bet*, and so forth. The quadrupled acrostic recalls the structure of Ps 119, but as is typical of *piyyut*, the poem is marked by a very strong rhythm (four beats, much like the *'aleinu*) and a deep intertextuality. The repetition of the first common plural suffix does not constitute an actual rhyme, but it anticipates its development.

For all its complexity, "אמנם אשמנו" is formally simple; the acrostic is its primary formal device, and that is hardly original. The *viddui*, "אז לראש תתנו," presents a much more complex form.[28] Sixteen of twenty-two lines of this poem survive. Each line begins with the appropriate letter of the alphabetic acrostic and contains four stichs. Between the second and third stich, there is a caesura; the third stich always begins with the words "while yet not" (*'ad lo'*). The first half of each line reflects the particular kind of sin associated with a specific body part (e.g., ears fail to listen) while the second half describes the punishment that will afflict the transgressive limb or organ (e.g., "ears will ring"). Much the way that the bounds of history limited (at least in theory) the scope of the historical poems described above, in this poem, the number of limbs provides the creative constraints to which the poet must respond.

The density of poetic features—proto-rhyme, rhythm, refrain, intensive allusiveness, and metonymy—mark both these compositions as true poetry from the preclassical period. Their language is densely allusive, not only to biblical texts but also to aggadic traditions (as will be explored below). Later poems, from the classical and postclassical periods of synagogue poetry (roughly the sixth century onward), develop these trends further, becoming even more intricately intertextual and formally diverse, and using highly ornate acrostics. The "early classical" period is typified by Yannai, who in the fifth or sixth century C.E. became the first poet to identify himself by "signing" his work, as well as the first to use end rhyme. After Yannai, classical Palestinian and Ashkenazic *piyyuṭim* continued to develop ever more baroque forms, eventually sacrificing comprehensibility and meaningfulness for dazzling artistry. Embedded acrostics became extraordinarily complex, embedding not merely names but complete benedictions ("So-and-so the son of so-and-so, may he live and become great in Torah and good deeds, Amen" is not unusual). Acrostics, which once limited the length of poems, became a formal device that enabled the works to grow much longer, but in a way that is not necessarily appreciated by the hearer, who cannot easily detect the puzzle-like embedded messages. The understated elegance of medieval Andalusian poetry—the works of Solomon ibn Gabirol, Abraham ibn Ezra, and Judah Halevi, for example—represent a self-conscious rebellion against the classical and postclassical payyetanic aesthetic, but for all their neoclassical simplicity,

28. The diversity of forms attested in Yose ben Yose's corpus serves as a warning against making facile correlations between formal complexity and chronology; Yose composed works in both simple and complex forms, while later poets, such as Yannai and Qillir, included widely different poetic styles within single compositions.

these works continue to include not only alphabetic acrostics but also signature acrostics and end rhyme, and introduce Arabic metrical systems, as well.

Poems such as these two works by Yose ben Yose are significant not only because of their most obvious formal devices, however; the use of acrostics is hardly new or unique in Hebrew poetry. As the final two sections of this essay, which address two modes of intertextuality, will show, the liturgical poets employed and reworked not only "biblical" language and models (whether direct quotation or formal devices) but also rabbinic texts and traditions (already hinted at by the discussion of *m. Ta'an.* 2:4), and eventually their own payyetanic tradition. While the chronological relationships between the earliest poetic texts and other penitential works can be difficult to delineate, as we move into the later period, chains of tradition become increasingly evident.

Intertextuality: Midrashic

Piyyuṭim are equally the offspring of biblical and rabbinic traditions, a relationship complicated by the fact that both *piyyuṭ* and classical *aggadah* are, in themselves, kinds of commentary on and interpretations of the Bible. In general, *piyyuṭim* are densely allusive works, employing both biblical and rabbinic language and imagery as the raw material for new creativity. Yose ben Yose's *viddui*, "אז לראש תתנו," described above, is a classic exemplar of this interdependence. In terms of biblical allusion, the opening three words alone synthesize Deut 28:13 and 2 Sam 22:41. At the present moment, however, the relationship between this poem and aggadic tradition merits particular attention.

Beyond the formal features of acrostic, rhythm, repeated phrases, and refrain, the skeleton of this poem is quite literally the human form. The specific body parts mentioned in the extant fragment include the head, the ear, the eye, the nose, the neck, the shoulder, the arm, the mouth, the tongue, the lips, the heart, the kidneys, the gut, the knee, the thigh, and—most abstractly—the will (*yeṣer*). As noted above, the first half of each line describes the sin associated with the body part, while the second half delineates the poetically just punishment that limb will suffer. In terms of form and content, this poem bears a striking resemblance to passages found in *Midrash Eicha Rabbati* 1:57 and *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana*, *Nahamu* (16:11). Like the *piyyuṭ*, these two midrashic texts present a litany of body parts, describing how Israel sinned through each, was punished by each, and—because the midrashim were composed to console rather than rebuke—will eventually be comforted by each.[29] For example, in *Eicha Rabbati* 1:57 (see Appendix, 6), the exegete states that Israel "sinned by means of the head,

29. The allegorical interpretation of Qoh 12 recorded in the targum (Aramaic translation) of that passage may provide a paradigm for the physical catalogue of these *piyyuṭim*. Underlying all these texts may be the traditional association of body parts with commandments: 248 limbs, for the positive commandments; 365 arteries for the negative commandments. See *b. Mak.* 22b; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12:1.

was punished by means of the head, and was consoled by means of the head." Then, to explain this statement, the poet reiterates the structure, using Num 14:4 to explicate the sin, Isa 1:5 to specify the punishment, and Mic 2:13 to show the consolation. The midrashic incipit reads like a line of poetry, while the poetry reads almost like midrash without proof texts.

Yose was not the only *payyeṭan* to find this exegetical structure appealing. The *payyeṭan* Yannai, writing a century or so after Yose ben Yose, composed a poem very similar to Yose's "אז לראש תתנו." The specific relationship between the two poems and the midrashim cannot be determined—did both poets draw independently on the same aggadah, or did Yannai specifically revise Yose's earlier work?—but the similarities in conceit are striking. Like Yose's *viddui*, Yannai's poem ("שמעו דבר"; see Appendix, 7)—written for the second Shabbat of Rebuke prior to the Ninth of Av—consists of a litany of body parts, again presented as vehicles for sin and punishment and again embedded in an alphabetical acrostic.[30] Yannai's text is, however, formally more complex than Yose's. Each stanza of the later poem begins with a quotation from Jer 2:4, the first verse of the *Haftarah* (prophetic lectionary) for the Shabbat. A specific body part (head, ear, eye, etc.) concludes each stich of the four-stich stanza, creating a particularly rhythmic cadence. In Yose's poem, the acrostic alone dictated the opening line, and while each body part was mentioned at least twice, once in the first half of each line and once in the second half, and as often as in every stich, its placement was not consistent. Yannai appears to have "updated" Yose's *piyyuṭ* in order to suit his more complex aesthetic—a setting where specific demands, such as use of the *Haftarah*, must be met. The acrostics and aesthetic of "listing" harks back to the style of works studied in the opening section of this essay. These two *piyyuṭim* show, however, just how important an understanding of rabbinic exegetical tradition is for a full appreciation of the creativity of the synagogue poets. Yose and Yannai participated fully in rabbinic culture.

Intertextuality: Payyetanic

As the poems "אז לראש תתנו" and "שמעו דבר" suggest, *piyyuṭim* are a self-conscious and consciously evolving literary form. These works engage with a variety of other texts and traditions—biblical and exegetical—and with each other as well. The poetry of one period can become a model for later poetic constructions. While the Yose ben Yose/Yannai example is relatively limited and can be explained by means other than direct borrowing, the example of the *'ašamnu* and its poetic offspring offers a particularly clear, complex, and complete picture of poetic self-reference and development.

As noted above, the *'ašamnu*, or short confession, has become, along with the

30. In Zvi M. Rabinowitz, *Piyyutei Rabbi Yannai* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1985), 2:318–21. Rabinowitz's edition includes two variants of the poem.

prose litany *'al ḥeṭ'*, the center of the Yom Kippur ritual. Over time, the *'ašamnu*, while not a poem itself, becomes a kind of paradigm for confessional, penitential poems built on the framework of its words. Much the way that midrash parses out the words of a biblical verse, uncovering deeper meanings within the series of words, *piyyuṭim* are composed that parse out and expand each word of the *'ašamnu*. Text becomes pretext.

Already in the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, we find poems that seem to be structured explicitly on the *'ašamnu*. For example, the simple alphabetic acrostic *piyyuṭ*, "מה נאמר לפניך" (see Appendix, 8) contrasts divine attributes in the first stich of each stanza with human transgressions in the second.[31] The "confessional" half of each line seems to be based on the *'ašamnu*: . . . אשמנו במעשינו . . . בגדנו בעונינו and so forth, until the final three *b*-stichs, which begin . . . שחתנו . . . תעבנו . . . תעתענו. To be sure, in a few cases the phrasing deviates from the *'ašamnu* as we know it, but the number of similarities suggests intentional engagement with the traditional formula or a close variant. The aesthetics of this poem, which are very simple—regular in rhythm but lacking rhyme—indicate that it is an early *piyyuṭ*.

In the *Siddur of Rav Saadia Gaon,* we find a strikingly similar poem attributed to Saadia himself ("אשמנו בדיבור ראשון"; see Appendix, 9).[32] Much like "מה נאמר לפניך," this poem embellishes the familiar structure of the *'ašamnu*. Each line of Saadia's poem consists of two stichs, and each line begins with an overt quotation from the older prayer: אשמנו . . . בגדנו . . . געלנו (the poem is fragmentary after the sixth line). Furthermore, the odd-numbered lines introduce the Ten Commandments: for example, the poem opens with, "We have sinned (אשמנו) with regard to the first commandment, 'I am'. . ."; the third line (געלנו) refers to the second commandment; and the fifth line (העוינו) to the third commandment. The Ten Commandments are thus spread over twenty-two lines, and presumably the final two lines (the letters *šin* and *tav* of the acrostic) would have served as a conclusion. Compared to "מה נאמר," Saadia's *piyyuṭ* is significantly more complex. By blending the text of the *'ašamnu* confession with the Decalogue—two familiar "canonical" texts—the poet has composed a strikingly original poem. These poetic reworkings of a traditional liturgical text suggest a corollary to Jakob Petuchowski's rule: one generation's *qeva* (fixed custom) can become another's *kavvanah* (source of inspiration)![33]

Both "מה נאמר לפניך" and Saadia's "אשמנו בדיבור ראשון," dating to the pre-

31. *SRA*, 146–47.

32. *SRSG*, 409. The poem is attributed in a heading to "The Fayoumi Gaon," presumably Saadia ben Joseph al-Fayoumi.

33. Other early *seliḥot* poems that are similarly modeled on or resemble the *'ašamnu* are catalogued in Israel Davidson, *Thesaurus of Medieval Hebrew Poetry* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1925; repr., New York: Ktav, 1970), nos. 8114 and 8115 (vol. 1); 2148–2151 (vol. 4). For Petuchowski's observation, see Jakob J. Petuchowski, *Understanding Jewish Prayer* (New York: Ktav, 1972), 11.

classical (anonymous) and classical eras of payyetanic creativity respectively, hew relatively close to the spirit as well as the form of the original *'ašamnu*, using the older text as a tool for exploring the many ways by which a person can transgress. As is typical of confessional prayer in Judaism, they are written in the first person plural, "we." In later Andalusian writings, however, we find similar poems composed in the first person singular. On the one hand, such individualism typifies the "new" voice of Iberian poetry, but in the context of confession, the departure from tradition is striking—it is, in many ways, a reverse of the pluralizing trend noted above, where biblical verses written in the first person singular were revised, for the liturgical context, so that they used the first person plural instead. The adaptation of this structure by the Iberian poets is an innovation but also an echo of the private devotions of various sages recorded in the Talmud. Once again the individual voice of the poet (speaking, at least in theory, as himself) is being heard.[34]

The earliest example of this kind of reinterpretation of the *'ašamnu* occurs in canto 34 of Solomon ibn Gabirol's masterpiece "*keter malkut*" (see Appendix, 10).[35] In this canto, the poet states his intention to confess in hopes of obtaining divine forgiveness. The text of his confession opens: אשמתי בתורתך. בזיתי במצותיך. געלתי בלבי. ובמו פי דברתי דופי. He continues through the complete alphabet. The communal litany of *'ašamnu*, "We have sinned," provides a formula for Ibn Gabirol's singular confession: "*I* have sinned." This simple change dramatically affects the impact of the familiar words, lending them a new immediacy and potency.

Perhaps inspired by Ibn Gabirol's model, we have a number of subsequent Sephardic poets who composed similar "individual" *'ašamnu*s. Judah Halevi wrote several, including "אשמתי ולבי ברב זדוני" (see Appendix, 11) and "אשמתי ואשמו נאות משכני." While these Sephardic poems remain in use today as part of the liturgy of individual fast days, most have survived primarily in the context of communal worship.[36] In fact, these *'ašamti* poems may have originally been personal creations; translating the form of *'ašamnu* into the first person serves both to personalize and specify the ambiguous nature of the original text's confession. Notwithstanding the inward aspects of these adaptations, however, Sephardic

34. The *payyeṭanim* of the preclassical and classical periods eschew writing in the first person except when writing in the voice of a biblical character. When speaking "personally" they employ the first person plural consistently.

35. The best version of this text is Solomon ibn Gabirol, *Keter malkut* (ed. Y. A. Zeidman; Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1950). A fine English translation of the poem has been done by Peter Cole and can be found in Peter Cole, *Selected Poems of Solomon ibn Gabirol* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). *Keter malkut* is also printed in all standard *maḥzorim* of the Sephardic rite, often without a translation.

36. See David de Sola Pool, *Book of Prayer According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews: Daily and Sabbath* (2nd ed.; New York: Union of Sephardic Congregations, 1966), 409, אשמתי בתורתך. בגדתי ביראתך. געלתי במצותיך.

communities adopted these new first person interpretations as their own. In effect, these poems assert the individuality of "I" in the midst of an implicit "we." In the liturgy, these poems do not replace the familiar *'ašamnu*; instead, they are juxtaposed with the familiar text, acting almost as a midrash on the liturgy.[37]

All of these formal aspects of *piyyuṭim*—the various "lists" that verge into the poetic, the acrostics that structure and channel the poet's energies, the adaptation of midrashic motifs, and the creative engagement with what have become "canonical" compositions—show how form can reflect in a most basic way the tension between tradition and innovation that typifies the Jewish liturgy. The verse anthologies and historically structured compositions, whether strings of quotations or true poetry, offer the poet an expansive, flexible, and open-ended structure on which to compose. Alphabetic acrostics are by nature more fixed, limiting the creative space, but not the creativity, of new voices. The deep resonance with motifs and rhetoric from rabbinic literature reveals how poems participated in both creating and transmitting the exegetical creativity of the rabbinic academies and also disclose the poetry embedded within midrash. And, as the early poems and traditions of penitential prayer become more fixed, the reuse of early poems and key texts creates structures of continuity, tangible connections with biblical and rabbinic foundational texts. By any and all of these methods, every generation has been able to add its own penitential voice to the liturgy, developing and transforming traditional structures to express new concepts and aesthetics of transgression.[38]

Conclusions

The topic of this essay—formal developments in penitential poetry of the synagogue—is broad. The popularity of *seliḥot*, and the fact that they were among the earliest genres of *piyyuṭim*, means that in some ways they provide a lens for examining the history of Jewish liturgical poetry in general. For example, the works examined here display clear trends in formal development, even lineages—from simple, proselike exposition to relatively more complex, even baroque styles, eventually returning to simpler, more elegant forms. The pattern of "simple, ornate, simple" typifies the history of premodern Jewish liturgical poetry.

For all the variations in form, both among contemporaneous works and over time, the continuity of the penitential tradition is striking. To this day, the High Holiday service contains more *piyyuṭim* than any other service. Indeed, many of these *piyyuṭim* are the same as or variants of works found in the *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*—perhaps "updated" or expanded but immediately recognizable

37. The *'ašamnu* is not the only text embellished this way; the Thirteen Attributes of God (Exod 34:5–6) likewise receive this kind of poetic expansion. See: *SRA*, 147, 148; *SRSG*, 305. Versions of all three of these poems are collected in Goldschmidt's *Seder Haseliḥot*, 7–10.

38. A cursory glance at contemporary *maḥzorim*, particularly those from the liberal streams of Judaism, will make this point abundantly clear.

nonetheless. Furthermore, when contemporary prayer book editors look for ways to innovate within their liturgy, they often employ techniques recognizable from the early poems, consciously or not. For example, English translations of the *'ašamnu* often recreate the acrostic element, going from A to Z (thereby teaching many American children the word "xenophobic")—emphasizing form over content in translation. When Rabbi Jules Harlow, the editor of a widely used North American Conservative *maḥzor*, wanted to expand on the themes of the Thirteen Attributes in the Yom Kippur services, he included an eighteenth-century poem by Moshe ha-Kohen Niral, based on *b. Roš Haš.* 17b and the Tosafot, that embellishes the familiar biblical text with simple explanatory glosses—transforming the familiar biblical-liturgical text into the scaffolding of a new work.[39] The poem is late, but the formal impulse well established—it is essentially a poeticized expansion of a traditional text, not very different from the way Saadia adapted the *'ašamnu*. With the recent interest in "creative liturgies," particularly in the United States, new penitential prayers, often in these classical modes, continue to be written.

What does this study of innovation and tradition in forms of penitential poetry teach us? Some factors—the cyclical tension between *qeva* and *kavvanah*—stand out, to the point of being obvious. But perhaps the very durability—the *satisfaction*, even—of these liturgical forms is worth emphasizing. Whether it is the elegance of classical organization, the appeal of the straightforward acrostic, the importance of key biblical texts, or the flexibility of the litany, able to expand (and, in some cases, contract), the striking stability of the penitential forms and texts over numerous centuries is remarkable. Ashkenazic and Sephardic, Reform and Conservative—various rites highlight not only the fluidity of penitential prayer but its fixity as well.

The study above has touched on a vast array of topics: the use of biblical texts and motifs in the liturgy, the relationships between "prose" and "poetic" texts, the connections between *piyyuṭim* and midrash, and the history of Jewish liturgical poetry as a self-referential genre unto itself. The works examined above are all, in various ways, merely examples of much larger and more complex phenomena. Much work remains to be done in the area of *piyyuṭ* studies and in understanding the intersection of *piyyuṭ* studies with all the other fields it touches. With every step, new questions have been raised and familiar questions have appeared in new guises.

What has become clear, however, is that for all the boundary crossing of these texts—poetry and prose, *piyyuṭ* and midrash, old poem and new poem—the various self-imposed constraints of form constantly inspired these poets. The techniques examined above appealed to both the intellect and the ear: the litany-like appeal of the "list" (anthologies of verses, historical précis, repetitious

39. Jules Harlow, ed., *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* (2nd ed.; New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1978), 392.

petitions of intercessory angels, and so forth), which suggests a kind of unity amid disparate texts and periods; the promise of totality implicit in the acrostic, which both exhausts and contains the possibilities for sin; the richness of allusive resonance with midrash, where poetry intensifies and distills large ideas into tersely patterned lines; and the witty reimaginings of familiar prayers that renew old poems and give them new life and meaning. On the one hand, these works engage deeply with tradition and with familiar aesthetics, both from the past and their own day. At the same time, however, working within the very constraints of form and function, the poets made these poems truly individual. Form, in some way, makes penitence manageable: lists promise completeness, acrostics limit the scope, and intertextuality (with the Bible, rabbinic writings, and other poems) adds depth, richness, and nuance. The general tensions of the liturgy—fixity and fluidity, tradition and innovation—all find expression here, with the patterns taking shape, crystallizing, and being broken open once again. It is a pattern that continues in the present day as liturgists appropriate the forms and techniques of the past and make them their own. Not only does the penitential impulse—the content—endure in the Jewish liturgy, but its forms do as well.

Appendix: Selected Texts

1. Opening lines from *seliḥot* compositions of various styles in *Seder Rav Amram*[40]

(a) Simple alphabetic acrostic

עננו אבינו עננו
ע' בוראנו ע'
ע' גואלנו ע'
ע' דורשנו ע'
ע' הודנו ע'

Answer us, our Father, answer us!
Answer us, our Creator, answer us!
Answer us, our Redeemer, answer us!
Answer us, our Seeker, answer us!
Answer us, our Glory, answer us! . . .

(b) "Historical" acrostic

כענית לאברהם אבינו בהר מוריה עננו
כ' ליצחק בנו על גבי המזבח ע'
כ' ליעקב בבית אל ע'

40. *SRA*, 157–58.

כ' ליוסף במצרים ע'
כ' לאבותינו בים סוף ע'

As You answered Abraham our father upon Mount Moriah, answer us!
As You answered Isaac his son upon the altar, answer us!
As You answered Jacob at Bethel, answer us!
As You answered Joseph in Egypt, answer us!
As You answered our ancestors at the Red Sea, answer us! . . .

(c) Aramaic "conceptual" acrostic

דעני לעניי ענינן
ד' לעשיקי ע'
ד' לתבירי לבא ע'
ד' למכיכי רוחא ע'
ד' לשפלי דעתא ע'

As You answer the poor, answer us!
As You answer the wronged, answer us!
As You answer the brokenhearted, answer us!
As You answer the crushed of spirit, answer us!
As You answer the meek of mind, answer us! . . .

2. Excerpt from *seliḥah* in *Siddur of Rav Saadia*[41]

אם עונינו ענו בנו ומריה / ברית אבות זכור נא לפוריה
<u>ענ</u>נו בגעיתנו שוכן שמי עליה / <u>כעני</u>ת לאברהם בהר המוריה

דחקונו צרים ונתנוהו לשסוף / הודנו חשך מבלי אסוף
<u>ענ</u>נו בוד<u></u>ויינו וחסדך ממנו אל יסוף / <u>כע</u>נ' למשה ולאבותינו על ים סוף

זדנו ושמנו על לשון רגל / חללנו שבתות בנסתר ונתגל
<u>ענ</u>נו בטוב טעמנו וחרפה מעלינו תגל / <u>כע</u>נ' ליהושוע בגלגל

If our sins and rebellion speak against us / recall, please, the covenant of our ancestors, for (the sake of) the descendants
Answer us in our agony, O You who dwell in the highest heavens / just as You answered Abraham at Mount Moriah

Enemies oppressed us and hewed us to pieces / Our splendor is dark, without being able to gather
Answer us in our confession, and do not end Your loyalty to us / just as You answered Moses and our ancestors at the Red Sea

41. *SRSG*, 311.

We rebelled and we gossiped / we desecrated Sabbaths in private and public
Answer us in the goodness of our words and remove shame from upon us /
just as You answered Joshua at Gilgal . . .

3. Text of intercessional prayer, "מכניסי רחמים"[42]

מכניסי רחמים הכניסו רחמינו לפני בעל הרחמים
משמיעי תפלה השמיעו תפלתנו לפני שומע תפלה
משמיעי צעקה השמיעו צעקתנו לפני שומע צעקה
מכניסי דמעה הכניסו דמעותינו לפני מלך מתרצה בדמעות

You who elicit mercy (angels) / elicit for us mercy / before the Lord of Mercy
You who cause prayer to be heard / cause our prayer to be heard / before He who hears prayer
You who cause cries to be heard / cause our cries to be heard / before He who hears cries
You who elicit tears / elicit our tears / before the King who is moved by tears

4. First stanza of Yose ben Yose's *seliḥah* "אמנם אשמנו" with first refrain[43]

אמנם אשמינו / עצמו מספר
אנחות דורנו / רבו מלדבר
אשר לא הקשבנו / גערה כמבין
אפפונו מכות / ככסיל הזדנו
דרכך אלהינו / להאריך אפך
לרעים ולטובים / והיא תהלתיך

Truly we have sinned / more than can be reckoned[44]
The groans of our generation / are more than can be told
For we did not heed / rebuke like an intelligent person[45]
Blows envelop us / like a fool we acted insolently
It is Your way, O our God / to defer anger[46]
With the wicked and with the good / and this is Your praise

42. *SRA*, 159; *SRSG*, 357; and E. Daniel Goldschmidt, *Seder Haseliḥot* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1965), 18.

43. Mirsky, *Piyyutei Yose ben Yose*, 118.

44. Ps 40:6.

45. Prov 17:10.

46. Most directly a borrowing of the language of Isa 48:9, but also an allusion to one of God's Thirteen Attributes (Exod 34:6–7). Mirsky cites a *baraita* in *b. Sanh*. 111a that interprets the phrase "deferring of anger" in reference to the wicked rather than the righteous.

5. Opening of Yose ben Yose's *viddui* "אז לראש תתנו"[47]

אז לראש תתנו / ונמנו: נתנו ראש // עד [לא] נכון בראש / רוינו מי ראש
בנו טעתה אזן / ובל אזן הטינו // עד לא שמועה / תצלינה אזנינו

Once You set us at the head (*roš*)[48] / and we said: "Let us choose a leader (*roš*)!"[49] // while yet there was nothing founded upon the summit (*roš*)[50] / we drank the bitter waters (*roš*)[51]
You planted the ear within us[52] / but no ear did we incline (to Him)[53] // until there was no hearing / (but) our ears were ringing[54]

6. Selection from *Eicha Rabbati* 1:57[55]

חטאו בראש ולקו בראש / ומתנחמים בראש
חטאו בראש דכתיב (במדבר יד, ד) נתנו ראש ונשוב מצרימה
ולקו בראש דכתיב (ישעיה א, ה) כל ראש חלי
ומתנחמים בראש דכתיב (מיכה ב, יג) ויעבר מלכם לפניהם וה' בראשם

They sinned with the head / and they suffered at the head / and they were comforted at the head:
They sinned with the head / As it is written (Num 14:4), "Let us choose a head (leader) and go back to Egypt."
They suffered at the head / As it is written (Isa 1:5), "Every head is ailing."
And they were comforted at the head / As it is written (Mic 2:13), "Their King passes before them and the Lord is at their head."

7. Opening of Yannai's *piyyuṭ* "שמעו דבר"[56]

שמעו דבר יי[58] / . . . [החקו]קים כף יד יי[57]

47. Mirsky, *Piyyutei Yose ben Yose*, 219.
48. Deut 28:13.
49. Num 14:4; the Israelites sinned through their wish to choose a new leader who would return them to Egypt.
50. That is, the Temple had not yet been built; see Mic 4:1 and Isa 2:2 for the language.
51. Jer 8:14; the word "bitter" (also rendered "poison" and "gall") is a homonym for "head."
52. Psa 94:9; God gave us the ability to hear (and thus His act of listening is justified) yet we do not hear Him.
53. Prov 5:13 governs the allusions in this line and the next.
54. 1 Sam 3:11.
55. Layout of text follows Mirsky, *Piyyutei Yose ben Yose*, 219n; see also *Pesiq. Rab Kah., Nahamu* 16:11.
56. Rabinowitz, *Piyyutei Rabbi Yannai*, 2:318–21.
57. The language comes from Isa 49:16.
58. Jer 2:4, "Hear the word of the Lord. . . ."

(שמעו דבר) אומר מה יהי בסוף מראש // ק.....ות ראש
בערו מכם שורש פורה ראש // [טרם יסופח בכם ח]לי לכל ראש

(שמעו דבר) גוזיר וכורה לכם אוזן // .....אוזן
דחו מכם ערלת האוזן // טרם תיק[ראו ויעלם אוז]ן

(שמעו דבר) הנופיח בכם נר עיין // פיקחו בתשובה לו עיין
ולא תת[ורו אחר עי]ן // טרם תהו כאפס וכאין

Hear the word of the Lord / . . . you who are engraved in the palm of the hand of the Lord

(Hear the word of) the One who declares what will be at the end-time from the beginning (*roš*) // . . . head (*roš*)
Burn out from your midst a root sprouting poison (*roš*)[59] // [before your][60] every ailing head (*roš*) is [scabbed over][61]

(Hear the word of) the One who decrees and unblocks your ear[62] // ……. ear
Cut out from your midst he who is blocked of ear[63] // before you cry out and He covers (His) ear[64]

(Hear the word of) the One who enflames within you the light of (His) eye[65] // open (your) eye to Him in repentance
Do not str[ay after your ey]e[66] // before you become like less than nothing[67]. . .

8. Opening of "מה נאמר לפניך"[68] (*SRA*, 146)

מנ"ל יי אלהינו מנ"ל כי אשמנו במעשינו
מנ"ל בוחן לבבות מנ"ל כי בגדנו בעונינו

59. See Deut 29:17 and note above.
60. Lacuna as filled by Nachum Bronznick in *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Yannai*, Supplementary Volume (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 2005), 275, on the basis of a separate fragment.
61. Isa 1:5.
62. Ps 40:7; Bronznick (*Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Yannai,* 275) suggests translating גוזר as "circumcises" (a meaning of the root in Aramaic and attested elsewhere in Yannai's work), which would then evoke similar imagery as found in Deut 10:16 ("circumcise your heart") in the language used by the Aramaic targum of that verse.
63. Jer 6:10.
64. That is, God ignores your prayers; see Lam 3:56.
65. That is, the soul; see Prov 20:27; Gen 2:7.
66. Num 15:39.
67. Isa 41:12.
68. *SRA,* 146.

מנ"ל גואל חזק מנ"ל כי גועלנו בעונינו
מנ"ל דיין האמת מנ"ל כו דלונו בעונינו

What can we say before You, O Lord our God?
What can we say before You, for we have sinned through our deeds?
What can we say before You, O Examiner of Hearts?
What can we say before You, for we have rebelled by means of our sins?
What can we say before You, O Mighty Redeemer?
What can we say before You, for we are loathsome in our sins?
What can we say before You, O True Judge?
What can we say before You, for we are poor on account of our sins? . . .

9. Saadia's "creative *Ašamnu* with Decalogue"—Complete Fragment[69]

אשמנו בדיבור ראשון אנכי אזי לב הותל הטנו
[בגדנו] והן דבקה לשוני בחכי / אשר נואלנו ואשר חטאנו

[ג]עלנו בדיבור שיני לא יהיה גם שופט צדק על ככה שפט]נו[
דברנו דופי ולא אמרנו איה / כי ליי אלהינו חטאנו. חטאנו.

העוינו בדיבור שלישי לא תשא הלא מעטה בושת על כן יעטנו
והרשענו ונותננו ל]משיסה.....

We sinned against the first commandment, "I . . ."
Then the heart was deceived and it enticed us
We rebelled and thus my tongue stuck to my palate
In that we were repulsive and in that we sinned

We were loathsome in regard to the second commandment, "There shall not be . . ."
Indeed the Righteous Judge has judged us on this
We spoke damagingly and did not say, "Wherefore?"
But rather we sinned against the Lord our God. We sinned.

We transgressed against the third commandment, "You shall not swear . . ."
Is it not a mantle of shame? Therefore we have enrobed ourselves.
And we sinned and we were given over for booty . . .
. . .

10. Ibn Gabirol, excerpt from canto 34 of *Keter malkut*:[70]

אשמתי בתורתך. בזיתי במצותיך. געלתי בלבי. ובמו פי דברתי דופי.
העויתי והרשעתי. זדתי. חמסתי. טפלתי שקר.

69. *SRSG,* 409.

70. Pool, *Book of Prayer,* 340; for a critical rather than "living" version of the text, see: Solomon ibn Gabirol, *Keter malkut*.

יעצתי רע לאין חקר. כזבתי. לצתי. מרדתי. נאצתי. סררתי. עויתי. פשעתי. צררתי ועורף הקשיתי.
קצתי בתוכחותיך. רשעתי. שחתי דרכי. תעיתי ממהלכי.

I sinned against Your Torah. I despised Your commandments. I was loathsome in my heart. And by means of my mouth, I spoke damagingly.
I transgressed and I was evil. I was haughty. I was violent. I spread lies.
I gave evil, unfathomable counsel. I lied. I boasted. I rebelled. I spurned. I was stubborn. I did wrong. I committed crimes. I was hostile and stiffened my neck.
I felt disgust for Your rebukes. I was wicked. I ruined my paths. I strayed from my journeys.

11. Opening of an "*Ašamti*" by Judah Halevi[71]

אשמתי ולבי ברב זדוני – אשם אשם לאדני
בגדתי ותלך נפשי בדרך גויתה – ותרד בגודה אחותה
גזלתי ושמתי ערפי כברזל – ולא פחדתי מאל שונא גזל
דברתי דופי ולשוני במקום קשט ויופי – תתן דופי

I sinned, and my heart, in the arrogance of my presumption—grievously it sinned against my Lord
I rebelled and my soul went in the way of its body—and descended in the rebellion of its sister
I stole and I set my neck like iron—and I did not fear Him who hates theft
I spoke damagingly and my tongue, in place of truth and loveliness—gave forth damages . . .

71. *Diwan des Abu-l-Hasan Jehuda ha-Levi* (ed. H. Brody; Berlin: Itzkowski, 1930), 278–79.

Penitential Practices in a Kabbalistic Mode

Lawrence Fine

Introduction

The small Galilean village of Safed was home to an extraordinary renaissance of Jewish life in the sixteenth century, particularly between the years 1525 and 1600. In the wake of the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluks in Palestine in 1517, Jews from various parts of Europe, North Africa, and the Ottoman empire itself were able to migrate freely to the land of Israel. Joining other Jews who had arrived in Safed even earlier, including refugees from the Iberian peninsula, they established a community that thrived economically, culturally, and religiously. In the religious sphere Safed became known throughout the Jewish world as the foremost center of kabbalistic learning and life. A remarkable constellation of kabbalistic scholars and teachers transformed Safed into a vibrant mystical community.[1] Intense eschatological and messianic aspirations, along with fervent devotion to prayer and ritual, combined to create an unusually creative and dynamic cultural moment, one that would have enormous influence upon later generations of Near Eastern and European Jews.

Among the many forces at work in driving this creativity and dynamism was an urgent sense of crisis and opportunity. The sense of crisis was engendered by the widespread conviction among kabbalists that theirs was a generation especially marked by transgression—personal and collective. The sense of opportunity was driven by the belief that penitence, prayer, and devotion could reverse the consequences of sin and help usher in messianic redemption. In this paper, I focus on several examples of penitential prayer and devotion among the kabbalists of sixteenth-century Safed. As already noted, the Safed kabbalists were burdened by an unusually intense sense of their own sinfulness. This sense of sinfulness was nourished and shaped by a very particular set of kabbalistic ideas and was consequently expressed in the language and symbolism of the kabbalistic tradition. But this kabbalistic language was itself informed by a wide array of earlier traditions, including biblical tropes in which the essays in the present volume

1. Concerning the historical circumstances that gave rise to the Safed community in the sixteenth century, see Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 41–51.

are especially interested. As we shall see, our sources draw generously on verses from the Psalms, certain prophetic books, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, and other biblical traditions having to do with repentance and penitence. Biblical themes of remorse and repentance, and biblical *practices* such as weeping and lamenting, and wearing sackcloth and ashes, find strong echoes in the literature with which we are concerned. Despite the many centuries separating the Safed kabbalists from biblical authors, it is clear that biblical penitential sensibilities resonated in this intensely pietistic mystical community. In addition, we will see that the Safed kabbalists had a strong consciousness of the ancient Temple and the penitential aspects of the sacrifices. They go out of their way to contrast the "idyllic" time of the Temple—in which sin was more easily expiated—to their own time in which strenuous efforts were required to accomplish the same results. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the kabbalists of Safed believed they could *commune* with the souls of biblical figures, particularly with those believed buried in the environs of Safed and the Galilee. Before turning to the particular rites that will be the focus of our attention, I wish to provide some of the context that will help make sense of these penitential practices.

Lamenting Exile

Despite the fact that they were living in the Land of Israel, the kabbalists of Safed possessed a powerful sense of *galut*, that is, of exile. This feeling of exile expressed itself most characteristically through the kabbalistic conception of *galut Hašekinah*, "exile of the *Shekhinah*." *Shekhinah* (or *malkut*) is imagined in Kabbalah as one of the two feminine dimensions of the ten qualities of divine persona known as the *sefirot*. The *sefirot* are ten "faces," "lights," or "radiances" that comprise the totality of divine being. In the pronounced anthropomorphic and gendered symbolism of the sefirotic schema, *Shekhinah* is a receptive female hypostasis that has no divine light or vitality of her own. Instead, she is filled with the nourishment that she receives from the *sefirot* above Her, mediated mostly directly through the *sefirah yesod*, the "phallic" aspect of divinity. As one of the ten manifestations of the Godhead, *Shekhinah* bears a wide variety of symbolic associations, including Daughter, Lower Mother, Princess, Queen, Bride, Earth, Moon, and Sabbath, to name a few. The union and harmony that ideally characterize the relationship between *Shekhinah* and her male lover and counterpart, *Tiferet*, are interrupted as a result of human sin. The *Shekhinah* is cut off from her source of nourishment and remains "exiled" from the rest of the *sefirot*.[2] Even though earlier kabbalists had spoken of the exile of the *Shekhinah*, it was the Safed mystics, now especially gripped by a sense of individual and collective responsibility, who took up this theme with even greater fervor. In the process

2. For an authoritative discussion of classical kabbalistic ideas, see Arthur Green, *A Guide to the Zohar* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

they exhibited a deeply and personally felt identification with the rupture within the life of the Godhead, and particularly with the misery and torment of the *Shekhinah*. The belief that transgression was responsible for this situation led Safed's kabbalists to seek out forms of penitence that could accomplish personal cleansing of the soul, and even more, help facilitate the arrival of the messianic age. Penitence in Safed took the form of liturgy and prayer, but as we shall see, it came to the fore most prominently in the context of a great variety of highly innovative extra-liturgical rituals.

Among the most distinctive penitential rituals that emerged in Safed was the practice of *gerušin*, "wanderings" or self-imposed "exiles," peregrinations that were carried out in and around the environs of Safed. This ritual was devised by two of the very most prominent kabbalistic figures in Safed, Moses Cordovero (1522–1570) and his brother-in-law Solomon Alkabets (1505–1576). Cordovero and Alkabets would journey in the area around Safed, particularly to the gravesites of prominent biblical figures, rabbis, and other saintly individuals, with whose souls they sought to commune. During the course of these "exiles" they would self-consciously imitate the exiled *Shekhinah*:

> A person should exile himself from place to place for the sake of Heaven, and in this way he will become a vessel for the exiled *Shekhinah* . . . he should humble his heart in exile and bind himself to the Torah, and then the *Shekhinah* will accompany him. And he should carry out *gerušin* by exiling himself from his house of rest constantly, after the fashion of Rabbi Shimon [bar Yohai] and his company, who exiled themselves in order to study the Torah. And how much better is he who bruises his feet wandering from place to place without horse and cart. Concerning him it is said: "His hope (*sivro*) is with the Lord his God" (Ps. 146:5), which they explained from the expression *shever* ("to break"), for he breaks his body in the service of the Most High.[3]

By this self-imposed act of exile and suffering, a person is able to express as well as experience the humiliation to which the *Shekhinah* has herself been subjected. Thus, Cordovero writes that his master Alkabets "decided upon the innovation that in the summer months especially we should on occasion walk barefooted in the mystery of the *Shekhinah*."[4] Moreover, it is a form of genuine penitential self-affliction, an opportunity to "break one's body" and to bruise one's feet in the dust, just as the bruised and suffering *Shekhinah* lies in the dust. Yet by such mystical peregrinations Cordovero and Alkabets were able to provide comfort for the *Shekhinah*, as the heart becomes a dwelling place for her to rest. Thus, while one

3. Moses Cordovero, *Tomer Devorah* (Venice, 1589), trans. and ed. Louis Jacobs, *The Palm Tree of Deborah* (3rd ed.; New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), ch. 9. The reference to Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai in this passage is to the protagonist of the Zohar. The narratives of the Zohar depict Shimon bar Yohai and a group of disciples who journey throughout the land of Israel.

4. Moses Cordovero, *Sefer Gerushin* (Venice, ca. 1602).

subjected the body to shame and humiliation in a powerful act of penitence and empathy with the *Shekhinah*, at the same time the humbled body served as a vessel in which she found consolation.

It is, of course, a matter of considerable paradox that the mystics of this community felt such a profound sense of exile, both human and divine. After all, this was not a community in extremis but one that enjoyed a relatively high degree of security and well-being. What is more, it was a community living not in the Diaspora but in the Land of Israel. Why is it, then, that these individuals focused so intensely on the condition of exile? In the first place, according to conventional rabbinic theology, redemption of the Jewish people involved more than the physical residence of some Jews in the Land of Israel. It entailed the ingathering of the whole Jewish people from the "four corners of the earth" and the arrival of the Messiah. The Safed community was well aware of the fact that the great majority of Jews were still living under precarious conditions in the Diaspora. In addition, Safed was home to a significant number of *conversos*, Spanish Jews who had converted to Christianity against their will under the threat of the Inquisition, but who had continued to live as Jews clandestinely. The *conversos* served as a continuing reminder of Jewry's vulnerability; moreover, *conversos* sought to overcome their past disgrace and to embrace Jewish life openly once again.[5]

The Midnight Vigil

Another widely practiced penitential ritual to which Safed kabbalists gave life was the midnight vigil, or *tiqqun ḥatsot*. Based on notions found in earlier Spanish Kabbalah, particularly the Zohar, midnight was considered a "favored time" for communing with God. Elijah de Vidas (d. ca. 1593), the most prominent student of Moses Cordovero, taught that one should rise at midnight in order to weep and mourn over the Temple's destruction and over one's own sins.

> One who wishes to sanctify himself when he arises at midnight ought to feel the distress of the *Shekhinah*, weep and mourn over the destruction of the Sanctuary; he should weep and mourn on account of the desecration of God's name, as well as on account of our sins, which prolong the exile of the *Shekhinah*. For at midnight, the Holy One, blessed be He, remembers Israel, which is in exile, and the destruction of His Sanctuary.[6]

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5. Concerning the presence of *conversos* in Safed, see Abraham David, "Safed, foyer de retour au judaisme de *conversos* au XVI siecle," *Revue des études juives* 146 (1987): 63–83; and idem, *To Come to the Land: Immigration and Settlement in Sixteenth-Century Erez Yisrael* (trans. Dena Ordan; Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 103–6. As David has pointed out, "Signs of the longing of Spanish *conversos* to settle in Eretz-Israel and throw off the mask of Christianity are discernible as early as the mid-fifteenth century, sparked by messianic expectations that intensified following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople" (*To Come to the Land*, 103).

6. Elijah de Vidas, *Reshit Hokhmah* (Venice, 1579); translation in Lawrence Fine, *Safed Spirituality: Rules of Mystical Piety, the Beginning of Wisdom* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press), 107.

Here again we have confirmation of the depth of sorrow and sympathy felt for the situation of the *Shekhinah*, and the assumption of responsibility for her fallen state. Her dependence upon the penitence of human beings is spelled out by de Vidas in these words:

> Even during the period when the Temple still stood, following the completion of the sacrifice, there were Israelites within their divisions, and Levites in their choirs singing, such that there was continual arousal [of the Godhead] from below. How much more so now, on account of our many transgressions, during this great and bitter exile in which the *Shekhinah* is deprived of arousal from below through sacrificial activity—and is supported only slightly by means of the deeds of the righteous—must they raise Her up from Her fallen state. For She is "the tabernacle of David that is fallen" [Amos 9:11], who each day sinks even lower than the previous one. All this is because of our transgressions, as it says, "And for your transgressions was your mother put away" [Isa 50:1]. For on account of our sins She falls lower, and by means of our righteous deeds She becomes strengthened. . . . Even though there is no [perfect] intra-divine marriage [between *Tiferet* and *Shekhinah*] in our state of exile, we must still fortify Her through acts of unification, which provide Her with some degree of inspiration.[7]

The prominence of the midnight vigil is attested in a colorful way in connection with the figure of Abraham Berukhim, well known in Safed for his unusually intense ascetic and penitential fervor:

> There was a certain individual here in Safed, may it be rebuilt and reestablished speedily in our day, whose name was the honored Abraham ha-Levi [Berukhim], may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing. . . . Every midnight he would rise and make the round of all the streets, raising his voice and crying out bitterly: "Rise in order to honor God's name, for the *Shekhinah* is in exile, and our holy Sanctuary has been consumed by fire, and Israel is in great distress!" Many things of this nature would he proclaim; and he would summon each of the scholars by name and would not move away from the window until he saw that [the scholar] had already arisen from his bed. And by the hour of one in the morning the entire city would be filled with the voices of those studying Mishnah, Zohar, and the Midrashim, as well as Psalms, the Prophets, hymns, and [penitential] supplicatory prayers.[8]

The practice of rising at midnight is amply documented in our sources. Thus, Moses Cordovero advocates the following to his disciples: "Every night one ought to sit on the ground, mourn the destruction of the Temple, and weep on account

7. Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 149.

8. Hayyim Vital, *Sefer ha-Ari ve-Gurav* (ed. Ya'akov Moshe Hillel; Jerusalem: Ahavat Shalom, 1992), 86.

of one's transgressions which delay the redemption."[9] Berukhim himself speaks of the midnight vigil as an established practice: "Most of the scholars of Torah, when they arise in the middle of the night in order to study, sit upon the ground, wrap themselves in black, mourn and weep on account of the destruction of the Temple. Such is also the custom of the Fellowship of Penitents at the afternoon service on the eve of the New Moon."[10]

Isaac Luria, Cordovero's successor as the leading kabbalistic figure in Safed, transformed the midnight vigil into a more elaborate rite. Luria's ritual was itself subjected to still greater adaptation and elaboration by editors and codifiers of his practices. Luria devised a ritual involving two parts, *tiqqun Rachel* and *tiqqun Leah*. Leah and Rachel, Jacob's two wives in the Torah, represented to the kabbalists two aspects of *Shekhinah*. During the "rite for Rachel" in the first hours after midnight, the adept was to grieve over the destruction of the Temple and lament his transgressions. Based on the late Lurianic sources, Gershom Scholem provided this account:

> The mystic, then, should rise and dress at midnight; he should go to the door and stand near the doorpost, remove his shoes and veil his head. Weeping, he should then take ashes from the hearth and lay them on his forehead, on the spot where in the morning the *tefillin*, the phylacteries, are applied. Then he should bow his head and rub his eyes in the dust on the ground, just as the *Shekhinah* herself, the "Beautiful One without eyes," lies in the dust. Then he recites a set liturgy composed of Psalm 137: ("By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept"), Psalm 79 ("O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy Temple have they defiled"), the last chapter of Lamentations, and certain special laments written in Safed and Jerusalem. Five of these songs became an almost invariable feature of this ritual.[11]

Following this the "rite for Leah" was performed, in which the liturgical focus shifted from lament and mourning to consolation and the anticipation of redemption. This liturgy consisted of selected psalms and a lengthy poem written by Hayyim Kohen of Aleppo, a student of Luria's disciple Hayyim Vital, that takes the form of a dialogue between God and the mystical community of Israel. In this poem, the *Shekhinah* laments her exile, while God depicts the anticipated redemption in vivid terms. Again Scholem:

> Even the unlearned, the Kabbalists held, should perform this rite, for the "time from midnight to morning is a time of grace, and a ray of this grace falls upon him even in the daytime." After these two parts of the ritual a third was recom-

9. Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 36.

10. Ibid., 51.

11. Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 149–50. See also Shaul Magid, "Conjugal Union, Mourning, and *Talmud Torah* in R. Isaac Luria's *Tikkun Hazot*," *Da'at* 36 (1996): xvii–xlv.

> mended, the "rite for the soul," *tiqqun Hanefesh*, in which the adept concentrated on the idea of uniting God and the *Shekhinah* with every single organ of his body, "so that thy body may become a chariot for the *Shekhinah*."[12]

The memory of the ancient Temple is invoked by each of these figures, de Vidas, Cordovero, Berukhim, and Luria. The Safed kabbalists cultivated the habit of regularly mourning the destruction of the Temple, and they were deeply conscious of the relationship between transgression, the loss of the Temple, and the bitter exile of the *Shekhinah*. They were aware that not only did the destruction of the Temple mean that they no longer had the original rites through which they could atone for sin, but that they had to devise new ritual strategies to do so. Still, the desire to restore the ancient Temple and sacrificial rites appears to have been one of the motivations behind the attempt to renew rabbinic ordination during the sixteenth century.[13]

Abstention from Food and Drink

Penitential practices in which the Safed pietists were engaged involved a range of ascetic behaviors, including the area of food and drink. We find recurrent reference to the desirability of avoiding meat and wine, or at least to consuming these sparingly. According to Cordovero, the drinking of wine was to be avoided during the day, although he allowed diluted wine at night. He further cautioned against eating more than a sparing amount of meat during the weekdays, as these foods endow *Samael* (Satan) with strength. Berukhim reported that "there are certain especially pious scholars of Torah who neither eat meat nor drink wine during the entire week because they mourn the destruction of the Temple and because of their own transgressions."[14] In addition to cautioning against eating too much meat or drinking too much wine, Joseph Karo's mentor-angel (*Maggid*) exhorts him to "take care not to enjoy your eating and drinking and marital relations. It should be as if demons were compelling you to eat that food."[15] His mentor-angel tells Karo, who was particularly obsessed with the need to avoid eating too much or enjoying it, that "you should very much prefer it were it possible to exist without food and drink altogether."[16]

A closely related practice was fasting. There are, of course, a small number of prescribed fast days according to the laws and customs of conventional rabbinic practice. The Safed mystics went beyond these by developing far more elaborate regimens of fasting. Thus, for example, Cordovero instructed his circle of disciples to fast for three consecutive days during each of the four seasons. Fasting in peni-

12. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, 151.
13. On this topic, see Fine, *Physician*, 51–53.
14. Ibid., 54.
15. Louis Jacobs, *Jewish Mystical Testimonies* (New York: Schocken, 1977), 105.
16. Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 56.

tence on the eve of the New Moon (*Rosh Hodesh*) became a widespread custom, important enough to be carried out by women, according to the report of Abraham Galante, a disciple of Cordovero. One anonymous authority instructed individuals to "fast on Thursdays and pray the afternoon service with a quorum of ten people who are likewise fasting."[17] As we shall see, even more rigorous fasting was one of the central forms of penitence prescribed by Isaac Luria for his own disciples.

In addition to these practices, there were other kinds of more exotic self-mortification exercises performed in Safed. These include the infliction of bodily pain—something that is not generally associated even with ascetically oriented Jewish traditions. Nevertheless, there is enough corroborating evidence to suggest that these were actually practiced. Abraham Galante provides a highly interesting account of the observance of the New Moon festival, alluded to above. It mentions not only penitential prayers and confession of sin, but flagellation and other forms of punishment of the body:

> On the eve of the New Moon all the people fast, including men, women, and students. And there is a place where they assemble on that day and remain the entire time, reciting penitential prayers, petitionary devotions, confession of sins, and practicing flagellation. And some among them place a large stone on their stomach in order to simulate the punishment of stoning. There are some individuals who "strangle" themselves with their hands and perform other things of a like nature. There are some who place themselves into a sack while others drag them around the synagogue.[18]

These practices became the basis for the regular observance of the waning and waxing of the moon that was established in Safed and became known as *Yom Kippur Qatan* ("Minor Day of Atonement"). We might be tempted to dismiss this report as Galante's exaggeration were it not for the fact that there is corroborating testimony about exactly this type of activity from Abraham Berukhim. In referring to a "fellowship of penitents," Berukhim probably alludes to a group of former *conversos*: "There is a fellowship of penitents whose members fast regularly and who pray the afternoon service each day in weeping and in tears. They practice flagellation and wear sackcloth and ashes. Among them there are some who fast two days and nights every week. Some do so for three days and nights."[19] More detailed evidence concerning such practices is found in a tradition *about* Berukhim preserved by Solomon Shlomiel of Dresnitz from the early seventeenth century:

> This pious one used to practice another custom. He would go out into the markets and the streets, calling for repentance. He would gather groups of penitents, lead them to the Ashkenazi synagogue and say to them: "Do as you see me do."

17. Ibid., 58.
18. Ibid., 54.
19. Ibid., 51.

> Then he would crawl into a sack, ordering them to drag him the entire length of the synagogue in order to mortify his flesh and humiliate his spirit. After this he enjoined them to throw stones at him, each weighing a pound and a half, which they would do. Following this, he would come out of the sack. A bed, covered with nettles, which burn the flesh like fire, would be prepared for him, and he would remove his clothing, throw himself naked upon the thorns and roll around until his body was covered with blisters. In a similar way, he would simulate the four kinds of punishment meted out [in ancient times] by the rabbinic court. Then he would say to those assembled: "My brethren, whosoever deserves to save his soul from Hell must do as I have done." And immediately they all rushed at once and submitted themselves to all of the same torments, crying out in bitterness of soul and confessing their sins. They would not leave there until they had accomplished complete and perfect repentance.[20]

Shlomiel's descriptions of Berukhim's self-mortification are almost certainly somewhat exaggerated; nonetheless, they are consistent with the general tenor of the ascetic practices in Safed, and they are quite consistent with the report by Abraham Galante quoted above.

The Penitential Practices of Isaac Luria

Isaac Luria (1534–1572), mentioned above, was the most influential kabbalist of the sixteenth century. Born in Jerusalem, Luria emigrated to Egypt with his mother following the death of his father. In Egypt, Luria became a rabbi, studying under the most prominent Egyptian rabbi of the day, David ben Solomon ibn Zimra (ca. 1480–1573). Luria was active in a circle of rabbis around ibn Zimra, collaborated in the writing of various works of Jewish law, and eventually began to pursue an interest in Kabbalah. He spent his last years in Egypt, largely in contemplative seclusion on a small island in the Nile. It is during this time that he appears to have begun to develop his distinctive mystical ideas and practices. He left Egypt for Safed in late 1569 or early 1570, and studied with Moses Cordovero until the latter's death about six months after Luria's arrival. Following Cordovero's death Luria almost immediately became the most significant kabbalistic teacher in Safed, attracting approximately forty disciples, whom he taught in an intimate fashion. While Luria himself wrote very little, several of his main disciples recorded extensive versions of his teachings, the best known of which are those by Hayyim Vital (1542–1620). The many descriptions of Luria's behavior and religious practices provide evidence that he was a charismatic figure, revered for his saintly piety as well as for his capacity to experience heavenly revelations from deceased prophets, rabbis, and saintly individuals. Luria died at the age of thirty-eight, leaving his disciples bereft. But his distinctive mythic teachings, along with the rituals and pietistic practices that he innovated, exerted a

20. Fine, *Physician*, 68–69.

profound and lasting effect virtually everywhere that Jews lived. In particular, Lurianic teaching had great influence on eastern European Hasidism, a pietistic movement that began in the mid-eighteenth century. [21]

Among the most significant roles Isaac Luria played in the lives of his disciples was that of physician of the soul. Before they could practice rituals intended to enable them to bind their souls to the divine realm and to repair that realm in accordance with the teachings of Lurianic mythology, his disciples had first to mend their own souls, to purify and cleanse them of all imperfection. No one whose own soul had failed to achieve a level of purification could hope to engage successfully in the elaborate contemplative rituals that Luria taught. A person had to cultivate certain moral and spiritual traits and atone for whatever sins he might have committed. Luria, in fact, provided his followers with highly detailed rites of atonement intended to enable them to mend their souls. These penitential acts were known as *tiqqunei 'avonot* ("amends of sins"), whose purpose, in the words of Hayyim Vital's son Shmuel, was to "mend his soul" and "cleanse him from the filth of the disease of his sins."

Lurianic teaching held that each person was in a position analogous to that of Adam. Just as Adam had transgressed and was in need of *tiqqun*, so too were all individuals. Indeed, every sin committed by a person constituted a reiteration of Adam's sin and further deepened the entanglement of that person in the realm of materiality. In his introduction to the *tiqqunei 'avonot*, Hayyim Vital discusses the relationship between one's soul and sin. The following passage offers an exceptionally lucid account of the Lurianic theory of sin, and the effectiveness of genuine penitence:

> Man is created from matter and from form, [the latter] consisting of soul, spirit, and super-soul, the divine portion from above, as it is said: "and [God] breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" [Gen 2:7]. And his body is dark matter from the side of the shell (*qelippah*), luring and preventing man from achieving perfection of his soul [in order] to cut it off from the Tree of Life . . . and so "there is not a righteous man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not" [Eccl 7:20]. It is known that sin is a blemish, stain, and rust in the soul, and that it is the sickness of the pure soul. When it [is immersed] in filth and stain, it is unable to perceive and achieve true perfection, which is [attainment of] the mysteries of the Torah. . . . And the transgression becomes a barrier separating the soul from her Creator, preventing her from perceiving and comprehending holy and pure supernal matters, as it said: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul" [Ps 19:8]. When the soul is pure and unblemished, then the supernal holy matters take shape in her, and when she dwells in rust and stain, everything becomes bittersweet, [i.e., evil appears as good]. [This is] similar to the sick person who, when he is ill, abhors the good things and loves things that

21. For a detailed account of Luria's life, see Fine, *Physician*, 19–39, 78–123. On Lurianic Kabbalah, see now Shaul Magid, *From Metaphysics to Midrash: Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbalah* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008).

> aggravate his illness. The doctor, in order to restore his health, gives him spices, including gall, by which his nature will return to what it originally was, and his health as before. So, too, the sick soul, to remove the sickness from her, must receive the bitterness of medicine and "return" from filth and the stains of sin [by way of] mortification and fasts, sackcloth, ashes and stripes, ritual immersions, and purifications. [This is] in order to be able to attain and comprehend supernal matters, which are the [hidden] mysteries of the world.[22]

The polluted nature of the human body follows from particular mythic notions characteristic of Lurianic teaching, namely, the way in which the creation of the world entailed a mixing of divine light and the darkness of materiality. Such pollution frustrates the human ambition to gain access to the sacred, in this case defined in general terms as contact with the soul's creator, and comprehension of the concealed mysteries of the world. Most relevant to our present concerns, we also learn here that the means by which the consequences of sinfulness can be reversed are rites of penitence, atonement, and purification. Only the weapons of penitential piety are potent enough to cleanse the soul of the stain that clings to it. Luria himself is the diagnostician and healer of diseased souls! This healing and purification were critically important insofar as Luria only disclosed his esoteric knowledge to those disciples who were completely pure and worthy. To this end he prescribed penances for various transgressions:

> He would not reveal any of the mysteries of this holy knowledge to one in whose soul he perceived, with the aid of the Holy Spirit [*ru'ah ha-qodesh*], a blemish—until he gave him penitential acts to straighten out all he did crookedly. And like the expert doctor who prescribes for each sick person the proper medicine to cure this illness, so too [Isaac Luria], may he rest in peace, used to recognize the sin, tell him where he had incurred a blemish, and prescribe for him the penitential act needed for this transgression in order to cleanse his soul, so that he could receive the divine light, as it is written, "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved" [Jer 4:14].[23]

Isaac Luria did what any good physician would do. He carefully diagnosed the specific sickness that his "patient" had and prescribed the appropriate cure. The role Luria played as a physician of the soul was explicitly corroborated several years after his death by another important Safed figure, Eleazar Azikri, who tells

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22. Hayyim Vital, *Sha'ar Ruah Haqodesh* (ed. Yehudah Ashlag; Tel Aviv: Eshel, 1961), 39. Translated in Fine, *Physician*, 151–52. Psalm 19, quoted in this passage, contains praise of God's attributes of justice and purity, as well as words of prayer in which the psalmist aspires to cleanse himself of sin, both unintentional and willful: "Who can be aware of errors? Clear me of unperceived guilt, and from willful sins keep Your servant; let them not dominate me; then shall I be blameless and clear of grave offense" (Ps 19:13–14).

23. Vital, *Sha'ar Ruah Haqodesh*, 39. Translated in Fine, *Physician*, 152–53. Jeremiah 4, quoted in this passage, comprises a plea by God for Israel to return in repentance.

us that "when the Holy Spirit descended upon him, he helped many to repent, for he informed them about the extent to which each transgression causes injury . . . and he instructed the enlightened [i.e., kabbalists] in the remedies [*tiqqunim*] that they must perform for the sake of their souls."[24]

Interestingly, the primary manner by which Luria was able to discern sin was by the divinatory technique of metoposcopy. Metoposcopy was one of the wide array of divinatory or mantic arts aimed at discovering the personal significance of events, past, present, or future by "reading" or interpreting signs from nature or from phenomena devised by human beings. Like chiromancy, or palm reading, metoposcopy was primarily concerned with the significance of lines, in this case, on the *forehead*. In Isaac Luria's case, metoposcopy was practiced by discerning the meaning not of the lines on the forehead but of Hebrew letters. Luria "could also recognize the letters on the forehead and [was adept] at the science of physiognomy, as well as at [recognizing] the lights that are upon the skin and body of an individual."[25] The appearance of various letters and their combinations—in the form of lights—signified that the individual had performed corresponding *miṣvot*, while the absence of such letters indicated sinfulness, whether by way of acts of commission or by way of omission. Another diagnostic technique that Luria employed involved feeling an individual's pulse and detecting subtle variations, through which he could determine the state of an individual's soul. The common assumption underlying each of these diagnostic methods is that the human soul manifests itself in signs that appear within and upon the body. However else they may be opposed to one another, there is a necessary link between body and soul.[26]

Equipped with these skills, Luria provided his disciples with penitential exercises that varied according to the transgression in need of expiation.[27] Hayyim Vital provides a list of transgressions and their corresponding penitence, including, for example, a generic category having to do with the transgression of positive commandments (such as neglect of prayer), drinking non-kosher wine, swearing a false oath, *thinking* about committing a transgression, haughtiness, dishonoring one's father and mother, cursing one's father and mother, humiliating another individual, speaking ill of the dead, anger, sexual relations with a menstruating woman, sexual relations with a Gentile woman, adultery, homosexual relations, and masturbation.

Leaving aside the first item, the general category of positive precepts, two other categories of deeds stand out. The first of these is proper ethical conduct.

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24. Eleazar ben Moses Azikri, *Sefer Haredim: Mitsvot Hateshuvah* (Jerusalem: 1958), ch. 2. Translated in Fine, *Physician*, 153.

25. Fine, *Physician*, 94.

26. For detailed accounts of Luria's divinatory abilities, see Lawrence Fine, "The Art of Metoposcopy: A Study in Isaac Luria's Charismatic Knowledge," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (1986): 79–101; Fine, *Physician*, 150–67.

27. For more detailed discussions of the *tiqqunei 'avonot*, see Fine, *Physician*, 167–86. The primary textual source for these penitential rites is Vital's *Sha'ar Ruah Haqodesh*.

Many of the items concern matters of interpersonal relations, such as haughty behavior or humiliation of another person. Personal vanity and disregard for the dignity of others were believed to be particularly powerful sources of defilement. The second category is the arena of sexual behavior. The exceptional concern with sexual misconduct is evidenced by the numerous examples of sexual impropriety, including adultery, homosexual intercourse, and masturbation. A person who had injured or incapacitated his soul by transgressing any of these prohibitions had to perform elaborate penitences in order to restore the soul to purity.

I want now to illustrate the *tiqqunei 'avonot* by way of several brief examples. Virtually all of these prescriptions for penitence employ the use of gematria, a technique of exegesis based on the correspondence between the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the numerical equivalents assigned to them. Thus, the first letter, *alef*, is equal to the number 1, the tenth letter, *yod*, equals 10, the eleventh letter has a value of 20, the twelfth, the value of 30, and so on. "Intrinsic" relationships between words or phrases can thus be established by demonstrating numerical equivalents. For example, the prescription for the transgression of violating the mitsvah to honor one's father and mother involves the gematria of the divine name *YaH*, which amounts to 26 when the letters *yod* and *heh* are fully spelled out, a form of gematria calculation known as *millui* ("filling"). According to Isaac Luria, the divine structures or "countenances" known as Father (*Abba*) and Mother (*Imma*) are associated with the name *YaH*. Thus, the number of fasts required to atone for this transgression is 26, along with 26 lashings. Performance of this penance atones for the sin, not merely by raising the sinner's consciousness with regard to his act but also by mending the damage done to the corresponding aspects of divinity through such transgression. Thus, the number 26 is hardly arbitrary or contrived from this perspective, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, but represents the intrinsic connection between a specific action and its effect on the Godhead. By concentrating on the precise number of fasts and lashings, their relationship to the name *YaH* and the divine countenances of *Abba* and *Imma*, the individual atones for a particular sin while at the same time repairing the injury suffered by the divine Anthropos.

The penitential remedy required of one who has publicly humiliated another person is unique. He must roll upon thorns called *ortigas*, the Spanish word for stinging nettles. Luria is said to have derived this practice from Prov 24:31, "The face thereof was covered with nettles." The word *face* is taken to mean the red face of one who has been put to shame in public. Just as the humiliated person is covered with "nettles," so too the guilty party must suffer affliction with actual thorns.

There is abundant evidence that Luria was particularly concerned that his disciples avoid anger. Vital reports that his teacher intended to provide each member of their fellowship with a *tiqqun* for this transgression, but Luria's premature death prevented him from doing so. Vital recalls that the essential basis for the *tiqqun* was a fast of 151 days, corresponding to the gematria of the Hebrew word for anger *Ka'AS*, plus 1 for the word as a whole. (It should be pointed out that such an implausible length of fasting was mitigated in two ways. First, a

single day of fasting did not include the night. Second, two such consecutive fast days were equivalent to twenty-seven days, whereas three consecutive days *and* nights were the equivalent of forty days of fasting.) Additionally, one should concentrate on the divine name *EHYeH* as it is fully spelled out *(millui*), as this spelling equals the gematria of *Ka'AS*. The special importance attached to the sin of anger is evidenced by the fact that Vital discusses quite a number of different forms of *tiqqun* for its expiation.

In all of the *tiqqunei 'avonot*, we encounter the same essential idea at work. A particular transgression has disrupted or violated the natural processes within the structure of divine being. The influence of human transgression causes the lights within divinity to flow in improper and unintended ways. They can be redirected, however, through the simultaneous processes of contemplative concentration and penitential action. Just as misguided behavior interrupts the normal cosmic processes, so corrective action can repair them. Fasting, receiving lashes, donning sackcloth and ashes, immersion in water, rolling naked in snow (!), sleeping on the ground, and lying upon thorns were not intended simply to punish or afflict the body. Accompanied by precise meditative intentions, they served the most consequential theurgical purposes. At the same time, these penitential exercises helped to cleanse the soul by eliminating the defilement it had incurred through sin. Even more, purification of the soul helped establish the conditions under which an adept could attain divine inspiration.

The Lurianic *tiqqunei 'avonot* are indebted to a significant degree to a similarly elaborate system of expiatory penitence devised by the German Jewish Pietists (*Hasidei Ashkenaz*) of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[28] The German Pietists cultivated the idea of the Hasid as one who constantly confronted divinely sponsored trials, the purpose of which was to challenge and test one's faithfulness to God. Overcoming the "evil inclination," domesticating one's passions, not the least among which were vanity and sexual lust, served as opportunities to merit reward by God. In these terms, the evil inclination was regarded as a necessary feature of the human personality. Asceticism was, naturally enough, a critical element of this type of spiritual perspective. Beyond the simple avoidance of illicit pleasure, the Hasid was actively to pursue severe rites of self-affliction, both as personal trial and as a form of penitence. The literary works of German Pietism include a genre of systematic catalogues of specific sins and their corresponding penances. Such manuals of penance bear a rather strong resemblance to the vast medieval ecclesiastical literature of Christian penitentials and may have been influenced by them, or by the example of actual Christian penance of which Pietists were aware. Like the treatises of the Pietists, these Christian manuals enumerate a wide array of transgressions, spell out the precise penance

28. For an authoritative study of the German Pietists, including their approach to confession of sin and penitence, see Ivan Marcus, *Piety and Society: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany* (Études sur le judaisme médiéval 10; Leiden: Brill, 1981), esp. chs. 3, 6, and 8.

required, and instruct individuals to whom sinners confessed how to go about their work.

The penitential exercises included many of the more extreme and unusual kinds of self-affliction that we have seen in the evidence from Safed. Thus, they call for extensive regimens of fasting, immersion in icy water, periods of sexual abstinence, and flagellation. For example, according to *Sefer Hasidism*, one of the central texts of this movement, one who had engaged in sexual intercourse with a Gentile woman had to fast three consecutive days and nights for a period of three years, or practice three three-day fasts in the course of a single year. The so-called Private Penitentials required even stricter regimens of penitence entailing a combination of fasting and flagellation. According to Judah ben Samuel, if a man has sexual relations with another's wife, he is required to sit in icy water in the winter and among insects in the summer. Moreover, he has to submit to severe flagellation in private on the days during which he fasts. For his part, Eleazar ben Judah of Worms enumerated detailed penances for the following transgressions in his *Hilkhot Teshuvah* (Laws of Repentance): sexual intercourse with an unmarried, ritually impure woman; intercourse with a betrothed or married woman, with a Christian woman, or with an animal (!); kissing or fondling a woman even without sexual intercourse; intercourse with one's own ritually impure wife; stealing; harming someone monetarily, physically, or verbally; publicly humiliating someone; insulting one's wife; insulting a convert to Judaism; provoking someone; murder; apostasy; taking oaths; speaking in synagogue; slandering someone; gossiping; and desecrating God's name.

The evidence that the German Pietists influenced the kabbalists of Safed is strong. We know that while the more radical forms of atonement promulgated by Pietism failed to transform German Jewry as its leaders had hoped, it did exert continuing influence. Eleazar of Worms's "Laws of Atonement" was long popular; his penances appeared from time to time in collections of legal responsa of German rabbis between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, thus infiltrating the mainstream of Jewish law to a significant degree. And there is evidence that ascetic practices of the Pietists had an impact on various subcultures of Jews in France, Provence, and Spain. Even more pertinently, we know that these traditions left an imprint on prominent kabbalists of sixteenth-century Safed, including Moses Cordovero, Solomon Alkabets, Elijah de Vidas, Eleazar Azikri, and Isaac Luria. With respect to Luria, for example, Eleazar Azikri wrote,

> I found another penitential practice among the books of the saintly kabbalist, the holy, pious Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi, may his memory be blessed, in a certain manuscript entitled *Bet Middot*. . . . There I found recorded all of the teachings of the earlier authorities having to do with reproofs on account of transgressions, rigorous ascetic practices [including rolling in] snow, [lying upon] thorns, fasts and [other] mortifications.[29]

29. Azikri, *Sefer Haredim*, ch. 3.

This report confirms Luria's knowledge of the penitential traditions of German Pietism, a fact that may also be inferred from the close resemblance between the two literatures.

As with the Pietists, Luria believed that the conventional ways in which individuals identified their transgressions and alleviated themselves of guilt were inadequate to the situation at hand. The various opportunities for self-acknowledgment of sin that rabbinic tradition made available failed to satisfy the need for the kind of rigorous and uncompromising self-improvement that Luria's approach called for. Luria did not wait for the sinner to seek him out voluntarily, but was able to determine a person's sin by gazing on his face. While some Safed kabbalists flirted with the idea of regular, public confession as a way of bringing attention to sinfulness, Luria appears to have rejected this in favor of what we have described here. This medical model, in which the physician is able to make a diagnosis merely by gazing on his patient's forehead, suggests a communal climate that favored a degree of public acknowledgement of transgression short of actual voluntary confession. To the extent that Luria's disciples desired the penitential guidance he could provide, it also suggests a climate in which individuals were willing to place their confidence in a spiritual mentor. In a way reminiscent of monastic obedience to a spiritual superior—such as in Roman Catholic tradition or Zen Buddhism—a disciple's personal autonomy is compromised for the sake of a greater good, namely, repair and perfection of the self.

"Falling Upon the Face"

The Zohar, the seminal work of thirteenth-century Spanish Kabbalah, has some rather striking views concerning the practice of the rabbinic liturgy known as *taḥanun*. Coming immediately after the Amidah, the central portion of the morning service, *taḥanun* is actually a varied mosaic of biblical verses and prayers from different periods. The technical term for this supplicatory prayer is "Falling upon the Face," or *nefilat 'appayim* in Hebrew. "Falling upon the Face" was a type of prostration customary in Babylonia during intense personal supplication (as attested in a narrative in *b. B. Meṣi'a* 59b about third-century rabbis), though its use during a liturgically fixed *taḥanun* is first attested in the late ninth century C.E. (*Seder Rav Amram*). According to the Mishnah, the ritual of prostration before God goes back to a practice in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem: "The Levites recited the psalm. When they reached the end of the section they blew the shofar, and the people prostrated themselves. For every section the shofar was blown, and for every blowing of the shofar there was a prostration (*m. Tamid* 7:3).

After the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E., this custom was transferred to the synagogues. Following the Amidah the opportunity was given to every individual to express heartfelt devotion to God in an entirely personal way. Although this began as private, unfixed prayers, eventually a collection of liturgical passages evolved whose main themes were confession of sin, the

worshiper's unworthiness, and petitions for divine mercy. Now, according to the Zohar, while praying the weekday Amidah (also known as the Shemoneh Esre, since it originally comprised eighteen benedictions), an individual gains in spiritual strength and brings about the unification of the male and female dimensions of divinity, *Tiferet* and *Shekhinah,* respectively. From this state of spiritual exaltation the adept engages in an act of voluntary, contemplative death while reciting *taḥanun*. One "hands over one's soul" (*moser et nafsho*) in an act of mystical death, the purpose of which is atonement for one's sins:

> Come and see: When a person prays in this way, with [appropriate] actions and words, and establishes the union [of above and below], by virtue of his deeds upper and lower worlds are blessed. Then a person must regard himself, after he completes the *Shemoneh Esreh*, as if he has departed this world, and has separated himself from the Tree of Life, and died near the Tree of Death, which returns his pledge to him, as it is said ". . . he (Jacob) gathered up his feet into the bed [and expired, and was gathered unto his people]" (Gen 49:33) as he confessed his sins and prayed on account of them. Now he must be gathered near the Tree of Death, and fall [upon his face] saying, "Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul" (Ps 25:1). At first glance I gave her (i.e., my soul) to Thee as a pledge; now that I have effected unification and performed act and word properly, and confessed on account of my sins, behold, I surrender my soul to Thee completely." A person ought to regard himself as if he has departed this world, that his soul has surrendered to the sphere of death. Therefore, there is no [letter] *vav* in it (i.e., in the acrostic of Ps 25), for *vav* represents the Tree of Life, and this [Psalm] signifies the Tree of Death. What does this mean to us? The mystery is that there are sins that are not expiated until a person leaves this world, as it written: "Surely this iniquity shall not be expiated by you until you die" (Isa 22:14). And this person submits himself completely to death and surrenders his soul to this region, not in a pledge as at night, but as one who has truly left this world. One must perform this devotion with sincerity of heart; then the Holy One, blessed be He, will take pity on him and forgive his sins.[30]

According to this view, the kabbalist, at his most vulnerable moment, the confession of sin, stands fully exposed and ready to accept the consequences of his deeds—death itself. No longer attached to life, he throws himself into the abyss of existence in the ultimate act of submission (*mesirat nefesh*) before God. Only divine mercy enables him to survive intact, his sins having been expiated through a momentary experience of voluntary death. Unsatisfied with the partial atonement possible in this world, the kabbalist chooses mystical death as a means of

30. Zohar 3, 120b–121. Psalm 25 is written acrostically but the letter *vav* is lacking. For variations on this motif, see Zohar 2, 202b; 3:176b. For a discussion of this theme in the Zohar, see Michael Fishbane, *The Kiss of God: Spiritual and Mystical Death in Judaism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).

achieving total purification of the soul, otherwise available only through physical death.

Commenting on this Zoharic passage, Moses Cordovero indicates that when a person performs this exercise he should prostrate himself and appear as if truly dead. In so doing, the male adept, whose body represents the *sefirah Tiferet*, cleaves to the earth (symbolic of the feminine *Shekhinah*), thus unifying male and female. Moreover, according to Cordovero, he must regard such death as being on account of having desecrated God's name, a transgression for which death alone can atone.

Isaac Luria also took a great interest in the ritual of *nefilat 'appayim* as described in the Zohar.[31] According to him, having raised his soul up to the highest spiritual "world" known as *Atsilut* ("Emanation") as a result of praying the Amidah, and having unified the "Four Worlds" that make up cosmos, the male adept *himself* cleaves, as in an act of sexual intimacy, to the divine feminine, the *Shekhinah*. From this extraordinary state of strength and exaltation, the adept—while still praying *nefilat 'appayim*—imaginatively "descends below to the farthest end of the [lowest] world of *Assiyah* ("Making"), as a person who throws himself from the top of a roof to the ground below." That is, he hurls himself into the lowest depths of the world, the scene of material existence and the home of evil, the realm of the *qelippot*, or "shells," in the language of Lurianic mysticism.

Importantly, Luria compares this process to what the rabbis of the Talmud taught regarding the fate of the righteous following death. They descend to the netherworld (*Gehinnom*), the site of the soul's punishment after death, grasp the afflicted that are found there, and retrieve them. This is made possible by the fact that at the moment of their death, righteous individuals unify the divine masculine and feminine, endowing themselves with the spiritual power with which to extricate sinful individuals from the consequences of their deeds. Luria thus likens the imagined death and ecstatic moment of *nefilat 'appayim* to the *actual* death of various individuals. Such a parallel makes it clear that Luria considered the descent into the realm of evil akin to a genuine act of offering up one's life, at least momentarily. The adept aspires to such a death since this is the only way by which to rescue certain divine sparks (found within those trapped in the netherworld) from the grip of evil. In this paradoxical construction, then, death is a *redemptive* act, calling back to life those souls trapped in a place of death. Unlike the Zohar's view of *nefilat 'appayim*, the Lurianic adept is not doing penance for his own sins as much as he is seeking to redeem the souls of departed individuals whose transgressive behavior has led them to *Gehinnom*.

I want to conclude this survey of penitence in sixteenth-century Safed with

31. For a more complete discussion of the Lurianic approach to *nefilat 'appayim*, see Lawrence Fine, "Contemplative Death in Jewish Mystical Tradition," in *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion* (ed. Margaret Cormack; New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 92–106.

a narrative tradition about Abraham Berukhim, whose ascetic zeal has been described above. Solomon Shlomiel of Dresnitz gives the following account:

> The ʿAri (i.e., Isaac Luria), may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing, taught that he (i.e., Berukhim) was the incarnation of the prophet Jeremiah. He once said to him: "Now, know that your days are completed and that you have no longer to live unless you perform a certain act of restitution (*tiqqun*) which I shall teach you. If you carry it out you may live another twenty-two years. This is what you must do. Travel to Jerusalem and go to the Western Wall where you should pour out your prayers and your tears; and if you are acceptable before your Maker you will merit a vision of the *Shekhinah*. Then you may rest assured that you will [indeed] live an additional twenty-two years.
>
> As soon as he heard this, the honored Rabbi Abraham ben Eliezer ha-Levi sold all the possessions in his house in order to pay his expenses for the journey and went to Jerusalem. He immediately secluded himself without interruption for three days and nights, which he spent in fasting, wearing sackcloth and in great weeping. After these three days he proceeded to the Western Wall where he began to pray and weep bitterly. While doing so he lifted up his eyes and saw upon the Wall the likeness of a woman with her back turned towards him. I do not wish to disclose the garments that she was wearing out of respect for our Maker. As soon as he saw her he fell upon his face, crying out and weeping: "Mother, mother, mother of Zion, woe is me that I have seen you thus!" And he continued to weep bitterly, afflicting himself, tearing hair out of his beard and head until he fainted and fell deeply asleep.
>
> Then in a dream he saw the *Shekhinah* coming towards him, and placing her hand upon his face, wipe away the tears from his eyes. She said to him: "Console yourself, Abraham my son, for 'there is hope for thy future, saith the Lord, and your children shall return to their own border' (Jer 31:17) 'for I will cause their captivity to return, and will have compassion upon them'" (Jer 33:26). Our honored Rabbi Abraham awakened from his sleep and returned to Safed, joyful and in high spirits. The ʿAri, may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing, said to him: "I can readily see that you have been privileged a vision of the *Shekhinah*. From now on you may rest assured that you will live another twenty-two years." And so it came to pass. Following this incident he [indeed] lived another twenty-two years.[32]

This extraordinary story captures exquisitely the penitential mood and dynamics that characterized Safed during this period. Berukhim is in need of personal *tiqqun*—for undisclosed reasons. Consistent with Lurianic teachings about reincarnation (*gilgul*), he is described as embodying the reincarnated soul of the prophet Jeremiah. Berukhim engages in a powerful episode of mourning and penitence, entailing seclusion, fasting, weeping and wearing sackcloth. He maintains this state of emotions whereupon he experiences a vision of a female upon the Wall, whom he identifies as the "mother of Zion." She turns out to be the

32. Abraham Ya'ari, *'Iggrot Erets Yisrael* (Ramat Gan: Masada, 1971), 205–6.

Shekhinah, who comforts and consoles Berukhim with promises of compassion and the return of Israel from captivity. Jeremiah 31, cited in our story, is a generous assertion of God's love, compassion, and consolation for the remnant of his people: "I will turn their mourning to joy, I will comfort them and cheer them in their grief. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and My people shall enjoy My full bounty—declares the Lord" (Jer 31:13–14). We have here a feature of penitence that goes far beyond the citation of biblical verses, or the echoing of older penitential themes and practices. Berukhim, like other Safed kabbalists, identified powerfully with the biblical past, an identification that expressed itself in nothing short of belief in the transmigration of souls. In Berukhim's case, he *experienced* himself as the ancient prophet Jeremiah, seeking comfort, consolation, and reconciliation with God. While the Safed kabbalists believed themselves to be responsible for the bitterness of exile, they were also convinced that they could repair the breach between themselves and God. A life of rigorous penitence was a means by which both to lament exile *and* to strive for redemption.

Concluding Remarks

It is worth reiterating the strong thematic connections between the penitential rites that we have described and some of the biblical traditions with which the essays in this volume are particularly interested. Virtually all of the features of penitential rites that we have surveyed here—prayers of supplication, fasting, sackcloth and ashes, confession of sin, rending of garments (as in Berukhim's vision of the *Shekhinah* wearing rent garments), prostration, expressions of remorse and guilt—are to be found in scriptural passages in the Psalms, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the book of Daniel, among others. Thus, in Dan 9:3–4, for example: "I turned my face to the Lord God, devoting myself to prayer and supplication, in fasting, in sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God, making confession." In Ezra 9:3, we read, "When I heard this, I rent my garment and robe, I tore hair out of my head and beard, and I sat desolate." And in Nehemiah's account of the assembly during which the Torah was recited before the people, we find that "the Israelites assembled, fasting, in sackcloth, and with earth upon them . . . they confessed and prostrated themselves before the Lord their God" (Neh 9:1, 3). Whatever postbiblical texts mediated between this biblical language and sixteenth-century kabbalists, there is no question that the parallel between the two is conspicuous. And immersed as they were in Scripture as a textual *and* living phenomenon, there can be little doubt that the language of the Hebrew Bible had to have had a deep resonance.

Finally, I want to suggest that virtually each of the superogatory penitential rites and liturgies described here was practiced in various forms in the following centuries. Most of these were disseminated as Lurianic devotional practices that eventually found their way to Jewish communities in many parts of the world. *Yom Kippur Qatan*, special rites at grave sites, *nefilat 'appayim*, and *tiqqun*

ḥatsot, all continued to be practiced in one form or another, especially in eastern Europe, both before and after the rise of Hasidism. A number of important guides, instructional manuals, and Lurianic-oriented prayer books—some of which were published over and over again in endless editions—attest to the truly extraordinary popularity of these rites.[33]

Let me exemplify this with respect to the practice of *tiqqun ḥatsot* and Hasidism. In his book *Sur me-raʿ ve-ʿaseh tov* (*Turn Aside from Evil and Do Good*), R. Tsvi Hirsch Eichenstein (1763–1833), the founding rebbe of the Zhidatchover dynasty, discusses the midnight vigil at considerable length. Tsvi Hirsch, a devoted student of Lurianic Kabbalah, begins by praising the vigil as instructed by Luria. But in a way that is characteristic of Hasidism, he rejected the path of extreme self-mortification:

> I have this as a tradition from my teachers—that a time of acceptance is bestirred at the midnight vigil to pardon any sin whatsoever in a far better way than the pardon offered as a result of many fasts and self-torments. In this generation, there is no man on earth capable of self-mortification through fasting. For fasting requires great separation, a departure into deserts, forests, and caves, as we find the heroes of the Zohar going out to the deserts of the dark mountains, places in which no person had trod; and they were as hermits of the desert. . . . Now, my brother, there is no better time for separation and solitude, when there are no distractions from the thoughts of other human beings, than this time (that is, midnight). Then a man can offer supplication for his unfortunate soul, which on account of its sins has become remote from the source of life, pure life, and has been made coarse by the material body whose foundation is dust. . . . At this hour he should review all his past life; speaking like a slave in the presence of his master, bending the knee and prostrating himself with outstretched arm and legs, he should utter gentle words from the heart, humbling himself while reciting words of supplication. He should offer his prayers in the vernacular that he speaks and understands, in order that they might flow easily from his soul's anguish at his sins and iniquities, and, as mentioned, he should beg for forgiveness. . . . As for us, all we have is confession . . . My brother, this is certainly far better than all the fasts, which only confuse and distract the human mind.[34]

True physical separation, as practiced by Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai and his companions in the Zohar, is replaced here by the midnight vigil, a modified form of "separation." Arising at midnight provides the solitude necessary to offer peni-

33. For more detail, see Fine, *Physician*, 5–6, 364–65 n. 9.

34. Zevi [Tsvi] Hirsch Eichenstein, *Turn Aside from Evil and Do Good* (trans. Louis Jacobs; London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1995), 38–41. It should be pointed out that there *were* tendencies among some Hasidic teachers to encourage a degree of ascetic practice, but this was minor in comparison with the prevailing views. See Norman Lamm, *The Religious Thought of Hasidism* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1999), 337–70.

tential supplications in a state of humility, and to unite one's soul with the source of all life. Sincere contrition, humility, heartfelt confession, intense longing to draw near to God—these are the elements required for successful penitence, not the self-torments of an earlier age. As with other Hasidic teachers, Tsvi Hirsch embraced traditional rabbinic requirements that an individual should regret past transgressions, confess his sins, and resolve to return to God with fullness of heart. But Hasidism was, at best, profoundly ambivalent about the austerities and asceticism associated with earlier Kabbalah, fearing that these would produce "severe defects of character, sadness, melancholia, bad temper, anger, and pride."[35] Surely, it sought to cultivate the art of contrition and repentance among its followers, but it also aspired to replace despair, depression, and self-abasement with joy and love for the Creator.

35. Eichenstein, *Turn Aside,* 40.

The Impact of the Penitential Prayer Tradition on New Testament Theology

Rodney A. Werline

Introduction

The New Testament contains no penitential prayer like those in Ezra 9:5–15; Neh 1:4–11; 9:6–37; Dan 9:3–19; Bar 1:15–3:8; the Prayer of Azariah; Tob 3:1–6; 3 Macc 2:1–10; and "The Words of the Heavenly Lights" (4Q504). Further, no New Testament text cites any of these penitential prayer texts.[1] This seems surprising given the tremendous influence that this tradition had on many Jews in the Second Temple period, especially the community at Qumran. Further, many New Testament texts speak of a change that has or must come in the lives of people, and some texts, like several of Paul's letters, attempt to correct behavior in the church. However, Paul never directs his congregations to recite penitential prayers like those listed above. Thus, any attempt to determine the impact of the penitential prayer on New Testament texts will require some excavation. With digging, though, comes the possibility of damaging both what is found and what lies around the find; in reaching conclusions, the interpreter may overreach what the evidence actually offers. Needless to say, the search for evidence of the influence of the penitential prayer tradition on New Testament texts requires restraint and caution as well as courage, and I have tried to exercise these virtues in this essay.

The goal of this essay is to assess the *impact* of the penitential prayer tradition on New Testament texts. What New Testament texts show evidence of the enduring power of this penitential tradition? Since we do not have actual penitential prayers in the texts, any trace of the impact of the tradition will have passed through some reformulation before influencing early Christian texts—perhaps several moments of reformulation. Thus, penitential ideas may have come to the early Christians not in prayer forms but via some other genre.

In stating the problem of analyzing New Testament texts for penitential themes in this way, I am putting into practice my more recent arguments in my essay on form criticism and penitential prayer in *Seeking the Favor of God,*

1. The Nestle-Aland 27th edition lists some allusions, but no citations. All biblical quotations are from the NRSV.

volume 2.[2] Drawing on theories and principles of ritual and liturgical studies, I proposed that prayer forms prove to be much more fluid than we scholars may sometimes seem to acknowledge because they are tightly linked to social settings in which they are produced or performed. Indeed, they are always changing. Some changes may result simply from a different person presiding over the ritual, or from changing social settings or conditions, or from making adjustments to a basic social convention to address a new problem. When any of these happens—and they constantly do—something slightly new emerges. The covenant renewal ceremony in 1QS offers a fine and obvious example of this kind of transformation as the ceremony adapts elements from the penitential prayer tradition in order to construct an entirely different ritual form.[3] Such transformations on the one hand demonstrate that a tradition is alive and meaningful. On the other hand, such changes naturally lead to the dissolution of previous shapes of rituals and liturgies and to the production of something new, a new addition to "cultural knowledge." These constant adjustments mean that no form is ever static or "pure"; any "pure form" is simply a scholarly construct. Thus, what makes a particular ritual or liturgy alive—its adaptability—may result in its eventual disappearance.[4]

In the first section of this present essay I examine Q, Romans, and Galatians with these methodological issues in mind. I chose these texts simply because they offered the potential for the most promising results. In assessing the *impact* of the penitential prayer tradition on sections of these texts, I first search for broader conceptual patterns and language of the traditions.[5] Consequently, I do not run to every use of the word "repent," which is used to translate at least three Greek words (μετανοεῖν, ἐπιστρέφειν, μεταμέλεσθαι) in the texts.[6] Of great importance are Q's and Paul's language related to covenant, God's righteousness, Israel's sinfulness, rejection of the prophetic warnings, punishment for sin, and the call for (or presumption of) repentance, all of which are central to the penitential prayer

2. See Rodney A. Werline, "Reflections on Penitential Prayer: Definition and Form," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 209–25.

3. Ibid., 220–22.

4. Ibid., 210–11, 222–24. For theories about practice closely related to these concepts, see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (trans, Richard Nice; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1980).

5. N. T. Wright (*Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 2, *Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996], 254) in his work on the historical Jesus encourages a somewhat similar approach. He recognizes that one must look beyond the use of the word "repent" to Jesus' actions and relationships to certain groups that may also connote repentance. Wright lists the following actions: (1) welcoming "sinners"; (2) call to live by different goals and values; (3) call to follow Jesus in the way of the cross.

6. For uses of μεταμέλεσθαι, see *T. Jud.* 23:5; Matt 21:30, 32; 2 Cor 7:8; Heb 7:21.

tradition, especially as it developed in the Second Temple period.[7] In identifying these themes within a text, and keeping in mind the above theoretical suppositions about the transformation of ritual and literary forms, I do not claim that Paul and the preachers responsible for the Q logia sat down with these penitential prayers in front of them. Rather, the findings in these texts demonstrate that aspects of the penitential prayer conceptual framework and language still lingered in the cultural air of these authors, diffuse as it might be, and occasionally they incorporated remnants of the form and constellations of thoughts into their speech; all this was simply part of the cultural knowledge of the period that could be accessed and employed for various uses. Comparisons with *Jubilees*, *1 Enoch*, the *Testament of Moses*, and the *Damascus Document* assist quite nicely in understanding how penitential ideas helped to form communities and their speech and therefore prove beneficial in determining the influence of the penitential tradition on selected New Testament texts.

In the second section of the essay I shall examine New Testament texts that explicitly mention confessing one's sins. These references are certainly brief, and therefore leave investigators with many, many unanswered questions. References include the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2–4; Matt 6:9–13), Jas 5:14–16, and 1 John 1:9. Although I could have treated the Lord's Prayer in the discussion of Q, I have placed it in this second section simply for organizational purposes. Conclusions reached about the Q logia will be brought to bear on understanding the Lord's Prayer as it has been received into the Q traditions. James 5:14–16 connects confessing one's sins to illness. This invites comparisons with other New Testament texts that claim that sin may lead to illness or even death. The passage in 1 John is of special interest because both confession of sin and a declaration of God's righteousness stand together. These are two key features of penitential prayers in the Second Temple period.

The Influence of the Penitential Prayer Tradition on Q

Penitential Movements in Second Temple Jewish Texts before Q

Decades before the development of Q, several Second Temple Jewish groups imagined themselves as penitential movements. They typically viewed the struggles of their era as evidence that Deuteronomy's covenantal curses had come upon God's people as a punishment for sin. These groups acknowledged their sins and repented even when the rest of the people of Israel, according to them, refused to participate and thus remained impenitent. Frequently, these groups combined the Deuteronomic penitential model, set forth in Deut 4; 30; and 1 Kgs 8, to their more idiosyncratic eschatological schemas, in which each group believed that it

7. See Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13;Atlanta: Scholars Pres, 1998).

constituted the promised eschatological penitential group. These texts include *Jubilees* 1 and 23, the Animal Apocalypse (*1 En.* 85–90), the Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En.* 93:1–10; 91:11–17), the *Testament of Moses,* and the *Damascus Document* (1–2, 5–6). I have already examined these texts in detail in *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*;[8] thus, I will summarize some of my conclusions from that study in such a way that they illume aspects of the Q tradition.

Jubilees 1 and 23

The basic Deuteronomic cycle, often designated as the "SER pattern" (sin–exile–repentance), is clearly discernible in *Jubilees* 1 and 23.[9] In *Jub.* 1, God explains to Moses that the people will eventually go into exile because of their disobedience to the law. The turning point arrives when the people decide to "turn" with all their "heart and soul" (vv. 23–25), clearly a reuse of Deut 4:29–30 and 30:2. At this moment in *Jubilees*, the people "acknowledge their sins and the sins of their fathers" (v. 22). The verb "to acknowledge" is tantamount to "to confess,"[10] and the language for the confession comes from Lev 26:40:

> And they will not obey until they acknowledge their sin and the sins of their fathers.[11] (*Jub.* 1:22)

> But if they confess (ידה) their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers. (Lev 26:40)

In describing the people's sinfulness, *Jub.* 1 also draws on the rejected, suffering prophet motif:[12]

> And I shall send them witnesses so that they might witness to them, but they will not hear. And they will even kill the witnesses. And they will persecute those who search out the law, and they will neglect everything and begin to do evil in my sight. (*Jub.*1:12)

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8. For a full treatment of the texts that follow, see Werline, *Penitential Prayer,* 109–59.

9. See ibid., 110, 113. Sin (*Jub.* 1:7–9, 11–12; 23:16–21); punishment (1:10, 13; 23:22–25); repentance (1:15, 22–25; 23:26); restoration (1:16–18; 23:27–31).

10. The Ethiopic word here is *'a'amara*, which has the primary meaning of "acknowledge" and probably is equivalent to the Hebrew *yd'*. Ethiopic does have a word for "confess," *'amna*. See Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 111.

11. Translations are from O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (ed. James H. Charleswoth; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985).

12. For an older treatment of this motif, see Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (WMANT 23; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1987). Steck attributes the continuation of the motif to the Hasidim, a position that is no longer tenable.

A prominent Deuteronomic theme, 2 Kgs 17:13, 23 had maintained that the fall of the northern kingdom had in part resulted from the rejection of the prophetic message, and 1 and 2 Chronicles incorporated this same motif in the interpretation of history (2 Chr 20:20; 36:11–16). The rejection and persecution of Israel's prophets run through the Deuteronomically influenced Jeremiah:

> I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them; yet they did not listen to me, or pay attention, but they stiffened their necks. They did worse than their ancestors did. (Jer 7:25b-26)

> . . . and to heed the words of my servants the prophets whom I sent to you urgently—though you have not heeded . . . (Jer 26:4-5; cf. also 25:4; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4)

This image resounds in the penitential prayer traditions. Those who crafted these prayers blamed the sufferings of their time on their assessment that the people were perpetually and stubbornly unfaithful, which is completely in line with Deuteronomy's ideology of history and its notion that the God has activated the covenantal curses (Deut 27–32). Several penitential prayers include these themes:

> For we have forsaken your commandments, which you commanded by your servants the prophets . . . . (Ezra 9:10b-11a)

> Nevertheless they were disobedient and rebeled against you and cast your law behind their backs and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you, and they committed great blasphemies. (Neh 9:26)

> Many years you were patient with them and warned them by your spirit through your prophets; yet they would not listen. (Neh 9:30)

> We did not listen to your servants the prophets who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. . . . and [they] have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by following his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. (Dan 9:6, 10)

> We did not listen to the voice of the Lord our God in all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us. . . . (Bar 1:21)

> For you have sent your anger upon us, as you declared by your servants the prophets, saying . . . but we did not obey your voice . . . and you have carried out your threats, which you spoke by your servants the prophets. . . . (Bar 2:20, 24)

The prophets, the prayers claim, had warned the people of the dangers of their behavior and had directed them back toward covenantal faithfulness through

obedience to the Torah in order to avoid the curses. However, as the prayers confess, the people resisted and rejected the words of these "servants."

Jubilees 23 also includes the SER pattern:

Sin	vv. 16–21
Punishment	vv. 22–25
Turning point	v. 26
Salvation	vv. 27–31[13]

While a divide between the group related to the text of *Jubilees* and other Jews may be only implicit in ch. 1, ch. 23 makes the separation absolutely clear. *Jubilees* 23 imagines a time in which the people become extremely disobedient—violence rages in society, the temple is polluted, Gentiles attack Israel, and nature is thrown into upheaval (vv. 18–25). Life spans decrease to the point that children and infants are aged with white hair (v. 25), perhaps a reversal of Isa 65:20. At this nadir, a group within Israel, "children," begin to "search" the law and commandments (*Jub.* 23:19–26), a phrase that mostly likely represents the Hebrew phrase לדרוש התורה. As I have argued elsewhere, the word "to search" in this passage no longer serves simply as a metaphor for "to repent," as it does in Deut 4:29 and Jer 29:13. Rather, the word has now come to mean "to search a text," that is, to study.[14] Of course, proper interpretation of Torah is crucial throughout *Jubilees*, as the book especially addresses halakhic and calendrical disagreements. Those who belong to this penitential group carry out their repentance, study, and dedication to Torah in the midst of an "evil generation" (v. 15). These penitents, referred to as "children" in the text, reproach the unfaithful generation, called "parents" and "elders," for their sinfulness, which is in part related to their improper interpretations (v. 16). The emergence of this group signals a great turning point in the condition of the people of Israel (vv. 22–32). Like *Jub.* 1, this chapter makes no reference to the return from exile. With the arrival of this penitential group, "servants" as the text also calls them (v. 30), the blessings of a new era begin. This group, not all Israel, inherits the promises of deliverance for the penitent.

1 Enoch: The Animal Apocalypse and the Apocalypse of Weeks

The Animal Apocalypse and the Apocalypse of Weeks in *1 Enoch* both depict the emergence of a penitential group during the time of an "evil generation." The author of the Animal Apocalypse (*1 En.* 85–90) rehearses all of human history, including Israel's history, by depicting Israel as sheep, their leaders as shepherds, and the Gentile kingdoms and their kings as predatory animals.[15] He divides this

13. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 72.

14. Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 111–12.

15. The foundation for the imagery is Ezek 34 and Zech 11 (cf. Jer 23:1–8). For a detailed explanation of the apocalypse, see Patrick Tiller, *Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of*

history into four eras. According to the author, the Jews of his generation are "blind sheep"; they are apostates and an evil generation. In the author's fourth period of history, which coincides with the turn of the second century B.C.E. and obviously the founding of the author's own eschatological group,[16] "lambs" are born who "begin to open their eyes and to see and to cry out to the other sheep" (90:6).[17] The metaphor "to open the eyes" mostly likely refers to a change that includes repentance, for the sheep's disobedience has been characterized as "blindness." Soon after the appearance of this righteous group, eschatological judgment arrives. The shepherds and the blind sheep are cast into a fiery pit (90:20–27), while the sheep with opened eyes achieve a preeminent place in the new era. Like many Hebrew Bible texts, the Gentiles pay homage to these righteous ones (90:30).[18]

Parallels between the SER pattern of Deuteronomy and the Animal Apocalypse clearly present themselves, but with some significant differences. Unlike Deuteronomy, which contains no timetable, but like *Jubilees* and the Apocalypse of Weeks (see below), the culmination of the SER cycle comes not at the beginning of the Persian period but later, in the Hellenistic era. Further, the apocalypse moves away from a purely historical perspective and instead focuses on an "eschatological dichotomy between the end of one era and the beginning of a new and final one."[19] The appearance of this penitential group marks the pivotal moment in this transition from one era to the other.

The Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En.* 93:1–10; 91:11–17) expresses the thoughts of an author in the Enochic tradition who also conceives of his particular group as a reform movement whose appearance is tied to a great eschatological shift. This author divides all of human history into ten weeks. Like *Jubilees* and the "Animal Apocalypse," the author of this text casts the Jews of his time, living in the seventh week, as a "perverse generation." The complaints of the author may be expressed more fully in the Epistle of Enoch (*1 En.* 92–105), as Nickelsburg has argued, which denounces the rich, the violent, and the fools with "woes" and judgment oracles that have been shaped by forms of prophetic speech.[20] The

1 Enoch (SBLEJL 4; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36, 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 354–408.

16. Werline, *Penitential* Prayer, 116.

17. Translation from George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation Based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).

18. See Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 116–117.

19. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 359.

20. For analyses of the formal features of the text, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Riches, the Rich, and God's Judgment in *1 Enoch* 92–105 and the Gospel According to Luke," *NTS* 25 (1979): 324–44. See also Richard A. Horsley with Jonathan A. Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 1999), 286; Richard A. Horsley, "Social Relations and Social Conflict in the *Epistle of Enoch*," in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*

Epistle's oblique references to covenant violations with a phrase such as "Woe to you who alter true words and pervert the eternal covenant" (99:2) suggest that the author is engaged in halakhic disputes with his contemporaries. However, the text does not offer enough evidence to determine the core issues of these disagreements. Nevertheless, the Apocalypse of Weeks speaks of this eschatological group as "chosen" and as a "witness of righteousness" (93:10).[21] This latter phrase seems to indicate that members of the group testified to the disobedience of the "perverse generation" living at that time of God's righteous judgment against them.[22] As witnesses to other Jews, they resembled in this activity the groups represented in *Jubilees* and the "Animal Apocalypse." As in the "Animal Apocalypse," the Deuteronomic SER pattern is discernible in the Apocalypse of Weeks, and it has also undergone a similar transformation as the author adjusted it to his eschatological scheme. The emergence of the penitential group stands again as the turning point.

The *Testament of Moses*

The *Testament of Moses* presents two cycles of the Deuteronomic SER pattern. Only the first pattern, however, contains a moment of repentance and an acknowledgment of the people's sins. The second cycle incorporates the mysterious figure Taxo, a descendant of Levi, who arises and explains to his sons that the people of Israel are sinners, while he and his family have remained righteous. The deaths of the innocent Taxo and his sons spark the turning point in the second cycle. These unique features of the second cycle greatly complicate the SER pattern and take it in a different direction from the above-mentioned texts. Although I list both cycles below, only the first cycle proves important for this present study:

Sin	2	5:1–6:1
Punishsment	3:1–4	8
Turning Point	3:5–4:4	9
Deliverance	4:5–8	10[23]

The consequence of the peoples' sins (ch. 2) is God's punishment, which comes in the form of exile (ch. 3). In fact, the *Testament of Moses* claims that the characters' situations fulfill Moses' statements in Deut 4 and 30—that the people would sin and go into exile because they disobeyed the commandments. Now the fate of the northern tribes has become that of the southern tribes. There in

(ed. Randal A. Argall, Beverly A. Bow, and Rodney A. Werline; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 100–115.

21. Nickelsburg and VanderKam note in their translation that this last phrase appears only in the Aramaic text and not in the Ethiopic tradition.

22. See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 447–48.

23. Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 120; and Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 75.

exile the southern tribes will "remember" Moses' words, and they will look to the northern tribes and cry out:

> Just and holy is the Lord. For just as you sinned, likewise we, with our little ones, have now been led out with you. (*T. Mos.* 3:5)[24]

Their opening words, "Just and holy is the Lord," form what Gerhard von Rad labeled a *Gerichtsdoxologie*, a declaration of God's righteousness in the face of human sinfulness and God's punishment.[25] In this scene the words serve as a kind of admission or confession of sin announced from one group to the other. The structure, theology, and placement of this confession flow from an author who views the struggles of his age through Deuteronomic lenses. In this cycle, then, traditions from Deut 4; 30; and the penitential prayer traditions become the language of a drama.[26] As Nickelsburg notes, while the fortunes of the people change, the restoration is incomplete and the Diaspora continues (4:1–8).[27] The text's second Deuteronomic cycle brings an end to any disappointments of the earlier partial restoration with the inauguration of a new era.

The *Damascus Document*

Like *Jubilees* and the Apocalypse of Weeks, the *Damascus Document* completely ignores the period of the return from the Babylonian exile. For the author of this text, his community becomes the real "returnees" (שבי) and the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prediction that God would visit the people after 390 years (Ezek 4:5; CD 1:5–7). In language reminiscent of the Enochic traditions, especially the Apocalypse of Weeks, the author calls his group a "sprout," a "shoot of planting" (1:7). The founding members of the group recognized their sin and "acknowledged" it, which again is tantamount to confessing sins (1:8–9; cf. *Jub.* 1:22). Still, for twenty years they "groped" like "blind men" (1:9–10); that is, they lacked proper interpretation for obedience to Torah. However, because they "sought God with a whole heart" (1:10), God raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness.[28] Under the direction of the Teacher, the group learns the proper path to follow. The group's faithful interpretation of the law, as in *Jub.* 23, is part of their penitential activity (col. 6). Because the group seeks God through proper inter-

24. Translation from J. Priest, "The Testament of Moses," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol 1 (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983).

25. Gerhard von Rad, "Gerichtsdoxologie," in *Schalom: Studien zu Glaube und Geschichte Israels: Alfred Jepsen zum 70sten Geburtstag* (ed. Karl-Heinz Bernhardt; AzTh; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1971), 28–37.

26. Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 122.

27. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 75.

28. For more on this phrase, see Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 128.

pretation, the author calls the members of the group the "penitents of Israel" (6:5).[29]

Foundational, therefore, to the community's retelling of its origins is the SER pattern in Deut 4 and 30, but with some important adjustments. The pattern is placed within a complex understanding of fulfillment of eschatological prophecies, halakhic disputes, and a personality called the Teacher of Righteousness. The *Damascus Document* ignores the Jews' return at the end of the Babylonian empire, apparently interpreting that entire period as the continuation of exile and the "clinging" of the Deuteronomic curses (1:17).

Summary

While the Jewish texts explained above draw on the Deuteronomic SER pattern, sometimes by only adopting portions of its basic structure and other times by quoting phrases from Deut 4 and 30, they still testify to shifts that have taken place in the Deuteronomic and penitential traditions. First, the Deuteronomic scheme of history, which is based on certain conditions, now becomes part of a predetermined eschatological schema. Second, Deuteronomy and prior penitential prayer traditions imagined that all Israel would participate in the future repentance and confession. In these Second Temple texts, not all of Israel repents and returns to faithfulness, but only a group *within* Israel, of course the group related to the author of the text. These groups then represent penitential movements within Judaism that remember their origins as rooted in repentance. They believed that they were the promised faithful people who would appear in the latter days.

Penitential Prayer Traditions and Q

The influence of the Deuteronomic traditions on the Q material has been recognized for some time.[30] These early Christians represented in Q saw themselves not as "Christians," of course, but as faithful, penitent Jews who were calling out to their own people to follow them in repentance. As the examinations of the Second Temple Jewish texts listed above demonstrate, this socioreligious model had been in existence for quite some time and it grew out of groups' understandings of Deut 4 and 30 and other penitential traditions. The early Christians related to Q traced their penitential roots to the work of John the Baptist and Jesus, whom they claimed stood in the line of prophets sent by God to the perpetually unfaithful and impenitent covenant people. In doing this, those who followed John and Jesus resembled other Jewish groups in the Second Temple Jewish period who preached repentance.

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29. This is my translation of the phrase שבי ישראל.

30. See, for example, John Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 101–3.

The Rejection of John

Though material on John the Baptist is rather meager in Q, only a few verses, the tradition claims that John preached repentance in the face of the impending eschatological judgment. He lived an ascetic life in the wilderness of the Jordan. Jesus in the Q tradition declares John to be in the line of the prophets, and even more than a prophet, because Scripture (Mal 3:1) prophesied his appearance at the end of time (Luke 7:24–28; Matt 11:7–11).[31] Q apparently agrees with Mark that John baptized people with a baptism "for the forgiveness of sins" (cf. Luke 3:7; Matt 3:7; Mark 1:4; see also Luke 3:16–18; Matt 3:11–12). While the debate continues to rage over the exact nature of this baptism and its origins, one can safely assume that the baptism provided a mode of "ritual" washing that accompanied repentance and brought one into the company of the righteous living at the end of time.[32] Only Mark tells us that the people whom John baptized confessed their sins in this process of repentance:

> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins (ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν). (Mark 1:5)

While not every penitential prayer contains the phrase "to confess" (ידה), one often finds it in the context of the prayers. Unfortunately, Q does not contain a reference to the people making their confession of sins. However, given the

31. Mark 1:2 also interprets John's ministry as the fulfillment of Mal 3:1, which suggests that several sections of the early church accepted this position. Of course, the quotation of Mal 3:1 in Mark is a notorious textual problem because some traditions attribute the prophecy to Isaiah.

32. For more on this, see Robert Webb ("John the Baptist and His Relationship to Jesus," in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* [ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans; New Testament Tools and Studies 19; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1994], 187–97) on John's baptism: "Therefore, the baptism did more than simply symbolize a forgiveness already received on the basis of the repentance alone. . . . [T]he baptism should be understood to mediate the forgiveness in some way" (191). Webb also argues that John's practice places him in the role of a priest (cf. Lev. 5:5–10; p. 192). In his monograph on John the Baptist (*John the Baptist and Prophet: A Socio-Historical* Study [JSNTSup 62; Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press, 1991], 184), Webb follows Behm and Würtheim ("νοέω," *TDNT* 4.980–99) and distinguishes between a general remorse for sin, a penitential repentance" related to practice in the cult, and a conversionary repentance, which is found in the prophets. John preached and practiced the latter. Such a dichotomy does not work. As the more recent studies on repentance and penitential prayer have shown, especially the work of Mark Boda (*Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9* [BZAW 277 ;Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999]), such neat distinctions between prophetic and priestly are not possible, for both influences bear on penitential traditions. Webb agrees with the implication of my above sentence that John's baptism also had an initiatory function ("John the Baptist and His Relationship to Jesus," 195–6).

strong Deuteronomic and penitential influences on Q, one might easily imagine that Q assumed that confession was part of the repentance; certainly acknowledging one's sins would necessarily precede repentance.

Because of the paucity of data, the specific contents of John's message and his complaints about Judean society remain somewhat obscure. In Q, John lets loose fiery sermons to the crowds who travel out to see and to hear him:

> John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Luke 3:7–9; Matt 3:7–10)

Q encapsulates John's message as focused on the approaching eschatological judgment that comes in the form of God's wrath against those who will not heed this end-time prophet's message. Those who resist John's message and consequently refuse to repent, according to Q, rely on their status as children of Abraham and heirs of the covenant.[33] As John S. Kloppenborg recognizes, Q casts John as a reformer who held that one cannot please God by this ethnic identity. Rather, "God required repentance and faithfulness of Israel and would destroy those who resisted the preaching of the prophets."[34] With John's emphasis on repentance, his prophet-like language and physical appearance, and the fact that relatively few would heed his message, the rejected prophet motif seems to have partially shaped Q's presentation of John.

A saying in Luke 7:29–30 that might be a variation on a Q tradition, as a comparison with Matt 21:31b–32 suggests, includes an interesting statement that may reflect Deuteronomic influence. In contrasting the reception of John's preaching by the people and the tax collectors with the rejection of his message by the Pharisees and lawyers, the text reads:

> And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God (literally, "justified God," ἐδικαίωσαν τὸν θεόν), because they had been baptized with John's baptism. But by refusing to be baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose (literally, "the will of God," τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ) for themselves. (Luke 7:29–30)

The phrase "acknowledged the justice of God" sounds very much like the declaration of God's righteousness, a *Gerichtsdoxologie*, in the penitential prayer tradition. Penitential prayers declare that God is righteousness for the punishment

33. Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 103.
34. Ibid.

that has come upon the people and thereby confirm the suppliants' understanding that their dismal circumstances have resulted from violations of the covenant that activate the Deuteronomic curses.

In light of these kinds of elements in Q, Kloppenborg, following Steck, proposes that the Q traditions on John testify to the continuing Deuteronomic theme of the rejection of the prophets, a theme that penetrates many streams of tradition in Second Temple Judaism.[35] The distinction that this possible Q tradition makes between the penitents and the Pharisees and lawyers is reminiscent of those who resist the will of God in the texts described above, typically labeled the "evil generation."

The Rejection of Jesus

Q's Jesus identifies himself with John as in line with the rejected prophets. A crucial text for establishing this relationship is the parable about Wisdom's children (Luke 7:31–35; Matt 11:16–19). In the verses preceding the parable, Jesus has affirmed John's special place in the history of God's messengers, which in turn will intensify Jesus' condemnation of those who rejected John and dismiss Jesus. The parable about Wisdom's children begins with Jesus rhetorically wondering to what he might compare the "people of this generation" (Matt 11:16; Luke 7:31), a designation that Q frequently uses to begin a pronouncement of judgment, and which also invites comparisons with the Jewish texts discussed above that speak of an "evil generation."[36] Although the allegorical features of the parable are difficult and confusing, it appears that Q intends to say that the "people of this generation" are like children who will neither "play" with John in the ritual of mourning in repentance or "dance" with Jesus in the celebration of the kingdom.[37] Q seems to identify John and Jesus as Wisdom's children who "vindicate" (ἐδικαιώθη) Wisdom's work in their own work, and the people's rejection of them as messengers is an affront to Wisdom (Luke 7:35). Kloppenborg, following M. Jack Suggs, suggests that the statement "Wisdom is vindicated by all her children" should also be seen against the background of Wis 7:27, which represents the prophets as "friends of God" created by Sophia.[38] Wisdom, as the divine agent of God,[39] is the extension of God's work in the world. Thus, an offense against Wisdom is in essence an offense against God. Such an idea appears in the early

35. Ibid., 103–5.

36. See e.g., ibid., 110–12.

37. For the problems of interpreting this logion, see ibid., 110–12.

38. Ibid., 111. Wisdom 7:27 reads: "Although she [Sophia] is but one, she can do all things and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets."

39. For Wisdom as an agent of God, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity and Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 103–4. For a myth centering on the rejection of Wisdom, see *1 En.* 42.

Christian traditions in the Lucan version of a Q logion about people's responsibility for the deaths of the prophets:

> Therefore the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute," so that this generation may be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation. (Luke 11:49–51; cf. Matt 23:34–36)[40]

These verses attribute the commissioning and inspiration of the prophets to Sophia. Q has combined the theme of the rejected prophets with traditions about the work of Wisdom, for the phrase "Wisdom is justified . . ." could obviously parallel the *Gerichtsdoxologie* as explained above. One might compare Dan 9:6–7, which juxtaposes Israel's rejection of the prophetic message with the *Gerichtsdoxologie*:

> We have not listened to your servants the prophets. . . . Righteousness is on your side, O Lord, . . .

Matthew places Q's judgment on the "Galilean cities" immediately following the logion about the resistance to Wisdom's children:

> Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they *did not repent* (οὐ μετενόησαν). "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, *they would have repented* (μετανόησαν) long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades. For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you." (Matt 11:20–24; Luke 10:12–15)

This text reverberates with the prophetic woe oracle form and the prophetic judgment oracle form, and thus again the tradition casts Jesus in line with the prophets through the rhetorical form of his language. In a thematically similar logion,

40. Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 111. Matthew's version of this logion appears in his "woes" against the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew groups the scribes and Pharisees with the ancestors who killed the prophets. He also alludes to Jesus' death as a continuation of this violent history by adding "crucify" to the charges against these two groups. Along with this, Matthew seems to refer to persecution that the followers of Jesus experience. Matthew's redaction preserves much of Q's original features, but gives the logion a little twist.

Q warns that the unrepentant people will be put to shame on the day of judgment by the people of Nineveh, who did repent:

> The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment, because *they repented* at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! (Luke 11:32; Matt 12:42)

While Nineveh listened to Jonah, God's people remain unchanged by the preaching of Jesus who, according to Q, is greater than Jonah.

In its condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees (cf. sayings in Matt 23:1–36, and Luke 6:39; 11:39–55) the Q tradition again resembles aspects of the prophetic and penitential traditions. Such lists originated in prophetic oracles of woe and judgment speeches, which the authors of the penitential prayers easily transformed into confessionary speech. Penitential prayers sometimes include a list of leaders which the penitents blamed, generally along with the people, for the rejection of the prophetic message. Note the following examples:[41]

> [B]ecause of all the evil of the people of Israel and the people of Judah that they did to provoke me to anger—they, their kings, and their officials, their priests and their prophets, the citizens of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Jer 32:32)

> The officials . . . are roaring lions; its judges are evening wolves . . . its prophets are reckless . . . its priest have profaned what is sacred. . . . (Zeph 3:3–4)

> [O]ur kings, our officials, our priests, and our ancestors have not kept your law or heeded the commandments and warnings that you gave them. (Neh 9:34)

> We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. (Dan 9:6)

The rejection of the prophets and the anticipation of judgment culminates in Q's lament over Jerusalem, which Q casts in the form of a prophetic lament:[42]

> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen

41. Cf. Bar 1:15–17, which speaks of God's punishment for sin coming upon this group.

42. On this point I disagree with Horsley (*Whoever Hears You*, 94–112, 279–80) as I understand him. He seems to reject the idea that Q takes on Deuteronomic ideology because it represents part of the "Great Tradition," the ideology of the Temple cult and its Roman clients and retainers. This, however, seems to go against his argument that the Q preachers called for a covenant renewal and structuring village life according to the preachers understanding of the covenant as it appears in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

> gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." (Luke 13:34–35; Matt 23:37–39)

The Rejection of the Q Preachers and their Followers

The Q traveling preachers placed themselves within this long tradition of the prophets stretching back into the Hebrew Bible, through John the Baptist, and Jesus. The Beatitudes, which Horsley casts as the blessings of the renewed covenant community,[43] somewhat like the blessings of the covenant in Deut 28, culminate with Jesus blessing these early followers because they are rejected and suffer like the prophets, who stand as their ancestors in the faith:

> Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven, for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. (Luke 6:22–23; Matt 5:11–12)

Understanding themselves within the long prophetic tradition, the Q preachers expected—or more likely had experienced—that their mission would be largely rejected by the people.

Q and the Traditions Related to Jewish Penitential Reform Groups

The above examination of Second Temple Jewish texts reveals that Q's themes would have been readily available in the traditional cultural thought patterns of Jews in Roman Palestine and that the Q preachers must have drawn on them.[44] The Q preachers have not simply returned to the Hebrew Bible with objective, fresh eyes in order to create something wholly new. Instead, they interpreted key Hebrew Bible traditions in continuity with what had been handed down in their cultural setting and would have further developed these traditions according to their own particular social predicament. Crucial in this determination is the similarity between Q's broad conceptual framework and the place of penitence within it. Like earlier Jewish texts, Q imagines the emergence of a reform

43. Horsley, *Whoever Hears You*, 196–201.

44. Pierre Bourdieu (*Logic of Practice*, 53–58) refers to this as *habitus*. He defines habitus as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (53). Habitus possesses "an infinite capacity for generating products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production" (55).

penitential group that appears at the moment of eschatological crisis. The special status of the adherents to the faith expressed in Q derives from their association with their founding leaders, John the Baptist and Jesus. These two leaders stand in the line of prophets and are the fulfillment of prophetic promises that relate to the eschaton—their appearance signals an eschatological turning point. While Deuteronomic language may not dominate Q, the above analysis again demonstrates similarities between Q and Deuteronomy's demands. As Kloppenborg summarizes:

> Deuteronomistic theology which characterized Israel as habitually impenitent and therefore in danger of judgment and final condemnation is in evidence at several points. One cannot help getting the impression that the redactor of this part of Q holds out little hope for Israel's conversion. Original missionary fervor has turned into sectarian polemics.[45]

The rejected prophet theme, so prominent in Deuteronomic traditions, stands front and center in Q. One must not forget that earlier Second Temple penitential movements drew on this image and kept it alive in the tradition. Undoubtedly a form of covenantal theology fuels Q's critique and vision. Richard Horsley even characterizes Q as a "covenantal renewal movement."[46] By coupling its eschatological perspectives with Deuteronomic themes and concepts, Q manifests a basic similarity to earlier Jewish penitential movements. The Q preachers' view that they are called to a "mission" to the rest of Israel has precedents in the early Jewish texts. *Jubilees* and the Animal Apocalypse depicted their respective adherents as calling out to the rest of the people. Whether actually delivered or not, those related to the Apocalypse of Weeks and the Epistle of Enoch formulated woe oracles and judgment oracles against the rich and unrighteous. Further, Q, like these earlier texts, speaks of the people living at that time as an "evil generation." Q offers its own form of covenantal blessing in the Beatitudes and curses in the form of its woe oracles. In what is perhaps its own twist of the *Gerichtsdoxologie*, Q declares that in all this Sophia is justified, which also means the God who commissions Sophia is justified.

The strength of Q's preaching lies to a large degree in the enduring importance of the penitential tradition. Jewish groups prior to the Q communities had already enlisted elements of the penitential tradition, with its connections to Deuteronomic ideology. This does not mean that the Q preachers sat and read the penitential prayers in order to formulate their sermons. Rather, in mid-first-century C.E. Judea this way of critiquing society remained a vibrant part of the cultural linguistic landscape especially appealing and available to dissatisfied,

45. Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 167.

46. See especially Horsley, *Whoever Hears You*, 195–227. Horsley likewise recognizes that covenantal and prophetic traditions have formed Q's form and content, referring to such texts as Ezra 9; Neh 1; 9; Dan 9; and Bar 1–3 (pp 109, 110, 203).

and perhaps disenfranchised, people. With their preaching, as in earlier Jewish penitential movements, the Q missionary message did much to solidify the group itself and draw distinct lines between those on the inside and those on the outside. To borrow a phrase from the *Damascus Document* (6:5), the Q preachers and their followers formed the "penitents of Israel" living in the midst of a wicked generation.

Excursus: The Rejection of the Prophets and the Structure of Luke-Acts

The theme of the rejection of the prophets in Q becomes an organizing principle in Luke-Acts. Jesus' inaugural sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30) clearly establishes this as part of agenda of the two-volume work. As the sermon begins, Jesus quotes from Isa 61:1–2 and declares that the prophet's words are being fulfilled in his arrival. The excitement of the crowd at this announcement quickly changes to anger as Jesus casts himself as the unwelcome prophet in line with Elijah and Elisha. Both these prophets met rejection in Israel, which led to the blessings of their office being experienced by foreigners. Jesus' own people now fill the role of the stubborn people of historical Israel, and the reader assumes that those who will receive the blessings of Isaiah are primarily the Gentiles, though Luke will wait until his second volume to reveal this fully.

At the beginning of Acts, Peter directs the crowd of Jews from around the empire in Jerusalem at Pentecost to "repent" (μετανοήσατε; Acts 2:38). Luke's citation of Joel 2:28–32 in Acts 2 proves fascinating because Joel contains rich penitential language, images, actions, and themes. Addressing the causes of a locust plague (or invading army?), the prophet Joel called for a repentance that included fasting, the wearing of sackcloth, lamentation for sin, weeping, and a solemn assembly (Joel 1:13–14; 2:12–17). Of course, Luke quotes the verses from Joel that speak of salvation, which Peter says are fulfilled there on Pentecost and are a sign of the arrival of the last days. For Luke, the early church constitutes the restored, penitent Israel that would appear near the end—"on that day." All who want to became part of this community must "repent." Many do repent that day, but as Luke continues his story he suggests that the church is finding less success among the Jews and more success among the Gentiles. In Stephen's speech before his death in Acts he interprets his situation through the theme of the rejection of the prophets:

> You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law ordained by angels. (Acts 7:51–53)

When Paul preaches in Athens, God has extended the opportunity to "repent" to the Gentiles—or perhaps now demands this from the Gentiles:

> While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. (Acts 17:30)

Luke ends Acts with Paul in Rome accusing the Jews of again rejecting the message of God just as their ancestors were described by Isaiah. Luke then quotes Isa 6:9–10 in Acts 28:26–27. Paul's final words are the following: "Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen" (v. 28).

This summary of structural features of Luke-Acts suggests that much more analysis could be done on the relationship between penitential traditions, the theme of the rejection of the prophets, Q and Luke's two volumes. Such a study should also consider this interesting transformation of repentance from a Jewish covenantal term to a requirement for Gentiles. In the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish traditions, Israelites or Jews who had in some way violated the Torah needed to seek repentance. For Luke this need for repentance now extends to the Gentiles. Obviously, such a change is tied to Luke's understanding of who makes up the covenant people, to whom the covenantal promises belong, and the very nature of the covenant.

Paul and the Penitential Prayer Traditions

The penitential tradition had a discernible impact on Paul's writings in Romans and Galatians, but has not had much influence on his other epistles.[47] The reason for this seems evident; in Romans and Galatians Paul must address issues related to the Jews—the covenant, sin, and the law—and interpret these through the meaning of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. The recipients of Paul's other letters are primarily Gentiles, and these issues do not lie at the foundation of their experience of life in Christ.

Romans

Recently some scholars have argued that Paul directs his rhetoric in Rom 2 not to Jews but to the ambiguous "whoever you are"—Jew or Gentile.[48] The content of vv. 1–11, this position maintains, appears to be more general in its application, which is supported by the repetition of the famous phrase in Rom 1–3: "First to

47. Mark Reasoner noted some similarities with Romans in "Paul's Prayerful Self-Presentation in Romans," paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL Nashville, TN, 2000.

48. See, for example, Leander E. Keck, *Romans* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 74; Robert Jewett (*Romans: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 196–98) also leaves the interlocutor ambiguous.

the Jew and then to the Gentile" (vv. 9, 10). Further, those who follow this interpretation argue that vv. 12–16 address the problem of sin and punishment as it relates to those under the law (the Jews) and those who instinctively do the law and are a "law unto themselves" (Gentiles).

However, the older position that Paul primarily directs the argument in 2:1–16 to the Jews remains more convincing.[49] Since 1:18–32 rings of the typical Jewish condemnations of the Gentiles,[50] it most naturally follows that those who "judge others" yet are "doing the very same things" are Jews. Jews would know that "God's judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth" (v. 2). The ambiguous inclusive "whoever" is actually a rhetorical strategy designed to entrap the Jews in their own condemnations of others, and thus sets them up for Paul's full frontal assault in vv. 17–29. Paul's references to the Gentiles in vv. 14–16 sounds more like indirect speech than a direct address to them, which, if this is the case, makes the Jews the primary conversation partners in this section. While ch. 2 speaks of the judgment of the Gentiles, they are praised in vv. 14–17 because some live up to the law that is written on their hearts (v. 15), admittedly a covenantal phrase drawn from Jer 31:33, which Paul also plays with in relation to the Gentiles in 2 Cor 3:2–3 where he states that the Corinthians are written on his heart. Paul's rhetorical intent in Romans is to shame the Jews by taking the prophetic promise of a Torah written on the heart and claiming that he witnesses its realization among Gentiles; he has lightened his language against them.

Seeing the Jews as the primary subject of 2:1–16 allows phrases from the penitential tradition to surface in the verses. A key governing metaphor in these verses is judging (κρίνειν) and judgment (κρίμα). Those who judge do so while failing to recognize or admit their own misdeeds; thus, they will be unable to escape God's judgment (τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ; v. 3). Sin and judgment are connected. Judgment has not yet arrived because of the "riches" of God's "kindness (τῆς χρηστότητος) and forbearance (τῆς ἀνοχῆς) and patience (τῆς μακροθυμίας)," which should have led to the people's repentance (εἰς μετάνοιαν; v. 4). These two attributes of God in the LXX relate to God's restraint in bringing punishment upon the sinner. As Charles H. Talbert explains, Wis 11:23 also contains the idea that God is patient so that the people have an occasion to repent:[51] "But you are merciful to all . . . and you overlook people's sins so that they can repent."[52] Talbert also notes that there may have been some concern in Judaism in the first century C.E. that people assumed that delay in punishment for sin indicated God's weakness (2 *Bar.* 21:19–25).[53] Further, Sir 5:4–7 warns students not to delay in repentance,

49. For example, James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 1988), 78; Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 79–81.

50. See, e.g., Wis 13–15; *Let. Aris.* 134–38.

51. Talbert, *Romans*, 80–81.

52. Jewett. *Romans*, 200–201. He suggests, for example, LXX Pss 24:7; 83:12; 84:12; 118:65; 144:7; Isa 42:14; 64:12; Sir 4:5–7.

53. Talbert, *Romans*, 81.

for God's wrath may suddenly come upon a person.[54] Paul's language at this point may also draw on the terminology of the Hebrew Bible's character credo, which lauded God's "awesomeness," "covenant faithfulness," and "grace," from which all God's actions emanated. The theological assumption is a foundational component of the penitential prayer tradition, as Mark J. Boda has demonstrated.[55] One finds the affirmation of God's covenant graciousness in Neh 1:5 and God's patience in Neh 9:31–32 and also hears echoes of the great credo in Exod 34:6–7. In this latter penitential prayer especially, God waits patiently for years, sending warnings through the prophets, hoping that Israel will repent (see vv. 29–31 below).

Instead, as Paul explains to his recipients, the people have yet to respond because of their hard (σκληρότητα) and impenitent (ἀμετανόητον) hearts" (Rom 2:5; cf. *Pss. Sol.* 8:29), in contrast to Gentiles who follow a "law written on their hearts." The reality of the eschatological judgment now bears down upon the Jews: "storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment (δικαιοκρισίας) will be revealed (ἀποκαλύψεως)" (v. 5). Nehemiah's penitential prayer speaks of Israel's failure to keep the law, God's patience, the people's stubbornness, and God's punishment:

> And you warned them in order *to turn them back to your law.* Yet they *acted presumptuously* and *did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your ordinances*, by the observance of which a person shall live. *They turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.* Many years *you were patient with them*, and warned them by your spirit through your prophets; yet *they would not listen*. (Neh 9:29–30a)

While not enough similarity exists between the language of Neh 9 and Rom 2 to propose that Paul directly relies on this text as he writes; both know that stubborn impenitence leads to disaster.[56] The similarities between the constellation of ideas in Paul's arguments and some features of his language in Rom 2 and the penitential prayer tradition suggest that threads from the tradition remained entwined in the cultural fabric of Paul's world. The ideas shaped Paul, and he molded them to fit his own conception of God's plan for Jews and Gentiles and his own perception of the circumstances in his mission.

As Paul's argument moves into ch. 3, he brings his focus back to the issue of God's righteousness, which he of course established as his theme in 1:16–17. In 3:9 he asserts that he has so far in 1:18–2:29 denounced the sinfulness of both Jews and Gentiles. Consequently, God's wrath directed at both groups is righteous, justified (δίκαιος). In all this, however, God finds an opportunity in humani-

54. Ibid.

55. Mark J. Boda, "The Priceless Gain of Penitence: From Communal Lament to Penitential Prayer in the 'Exilic' Liturgy of Israel," *HBT* 25 (2003): 54; cf. Exod 34:6.

56. Cf. Talbert, *Romans*, 81.

ty's miserable state to bring deliverance, a point that Paul will feel compelled to nuance and clarify at later moments in Romans.[57] His scriptural authority for God's righteousness comes from Ps 51:4 (LXX 50:6), an individual confessional psalm:

> So that you may be justified in your words
> and prevail in your judging. (Rom 3:4)

Besides Ps 51, declarations of God's righteousness appear frequently in penitential prayer traditions (e.g., Dan 9:7; Bar 1:15; 2:6; Add Esth 14:7). In the covenant renewal ceremony in 1QS, the priests declare the "just deeds of God" followed by the members of the community confessing their sins and God's righteousness:

> [And al]l those who enter the covenant shall confess after them and they shall say: "We have acted sinfully, we have transgressed, we have [sin]nned, we have committed evil, we and our [fa]thers before us, inasmuch as we walk [. . .] truth and just [. . .] his judgment upon us and upon o[ur] fathers." (1QS 1:24–26)[58]

Though the text is damaged in the last two lines quoted above, enough exists to assume that the people confessed that God (or God's punishment) is "true and righteous" (אמת וצדיק) (see also Pr Azar 4–5a; Tob 3:2) This is the same word pair that Paul uses in Rom 3:4: "Let God be proved true (ἀληθής) . . . you [God] may be justified . . . (δικαιωθῇς)." As I have demonstrated elsewhere, Ps 51 rarely appears in the penitential prayer traditions, with the exceptions of Pr Azar 16–17 (LXX Dan 3:39), the Prayer of Manasseh and 4Q393. This last text, though very fragmentary, also clearly exhibits similarities with Neh 1:5; 9:17, 32; and Dan 9:4 and thus connects the Deuteronomic-Levitical penitential prayer tradition with this individual psalm of confession. The few uses of Ps 51 within the Deuteronomic-Levitical penitential prayer traditions results from the former's focus on the sins of the individual and the latter's corporate emphasis.[59]

A catena comprising primarily psalms appears a few verses after the citation from Ps 51 in Rom 3:10b–18.[60] The quotations are in the following order: Pss

57. For example, should humans continue to provide God with more opportunities to show grace (6:1)? Has the word/promises of God failed given the Jews' general resistance to the gospel? (chs. 9–11).

58. Translations are from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 1, *1Q1–4Q272* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

59. For more on the place of Ps 51 in the penitential prayer tradition, see Judith H. Newman, "The Form and Settings of the Prayer of Manasseh," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 105–25.

60. Talbert (*Romans*, 91) appears to argue that Rom 3:1–20 is entirely directed at the Jews. The addressee is somewhat ambiguous, for introduction to the catena refers to both Jews and

14:3; 53:1–2; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isa 59:7–8; Prov 1:16; and Ps 36:1. Because nothing in the catena is uniquely Christian, studies have suggested that the collection could easily have a Jewish origin and may have been used in the synagogue in some fashion.[61] Precisely here one wishes for more data and information in order to know the function of the catena. Did it function much as Paul employs it in Romans, as a pronouncement of human wickedness? If so, would it be followed by a confession of sin from the worshipers? Just as fascinating is the possibility that Paul's citation from Ps 51:4 belongs with the catena. If this is the case, then the catena would contain a declaration of God's righteousness, a *Gerichtsdoxologie*. This combination parallels two of the features of the *Community Rule* mentioned above, as well as each penitential prayer that has survived. These verses that begin Rom 3, therefore, contain several elements found in penitential prayers; only the confession of sin is missing from the Romans catena. A major difference between the catena and the penitential prayer tradition is the lack of Deuteronomic material in the catena, for the catena consists primarily of psalms. If the catena somehow reflects the influence of the penitential prayer tradition, then it also demonstrates that Jewish liturgists continued to work creatively with the basic penitential prayer structure of condemnation of sins, declaration of God's righteousness, and confession of sin. Whether or not this catena existed within this structure in the first-century synagogue remains unknown. However, in the first centuries of the church's worship the psalms included in this catena and other Psalms in Romans became penitential psalms.[62]

Romans 3:21–26 brings Paul's first movement on God's righteousness, which started in 1:16–17, to a close. In contrast to God's righteousness, Paul declares that all humans are sinners, or perhaps confesses the sins of all humans: "[S]ince all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (v. 23).[63] God's righteousness (or faithfulness or "truthfulness"[64]) is now manifested in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.[65] Jesus' death and resurrection have the effect of extending God's mercy to both Jew and Gentile and unite them in eschatological praise of God (cf. 15:8–9).[66]

Gentiles (v. 9). However, when Paul concludes the catena, he launches into speech about the law in vv. 19–20, which he must be directing at Jews.

61. For more, see Jewett, *Romans*, 254–55.

62. For more about these psalms, see Samuel E. Balentine, "'I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask,'" in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 2–3.

63. Mark Boda suggested the possibility that Paul's words function as a confession of sin.

64. Suggested as a synonym by Jewett (*Romans,* 246–47) because of the placement of righteous with true in 3:4.

65. Following Sam K. Williams, "The 'Righteousness of God' in Romans" JBL 99 (1980): 241–90.

66. Jewett, *Romans*, 247.

What window does Romans provide on the impact and development of the penitential traditions on Paul's thought? Paul asserts God's righteousness in the face of human sin. Any failure in the human condition rests with humans, not with God; and both Jews and Gentiles are sinners. Therefore, quite in line with Deuteronomic thought, judgment is justly upon both Jew and Gentile. It is fascinating that Paul has extended this problem to the Gentiles, something not found in the penitential prayer traditions, which focus only on Israel's sinfulness. Further, the apostle claims that God's wrath is loose on the Gentiles as they are turned over to their own sinfulness. In the penitential traditions, so influenced by Deuteronomic covenantal ideology, the focus is on the punishments that have come upon the people of Israel and not the Gentiles. Paul also emphasizes God's goodness and divine forbearance in regard to sin in the process of delivering humanity and bringing people to repentance (Rom 2:4; 3:25), a theme prominent in penitential prayer and in other Second Temple discussions about repentance. Like the penitential tradition described above, Paul believes that the time for repentance has arrived and that he has been called to announce it. For Paul, the great eschatological turning point has come in the work of Jesus Christ (3:21–26).

Galatians

James M. Scott's article on the "curse of the law" in Gal 3:10 explores, in part, the influences of the penitential tradition, along with accompanying traditions, on Paul's argument through this section of Galatians.[67] In my discussion of Galatians below, I basically summarize Scott's work.

In his struggle with those who are preaching "another gospel" to the Galatian churches, Paul attempts to dissuade his new converts from submitting to circumcision and practicing the law by claiming that all who "rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law'" (Gal 3:10). Paul's scriptural proof is Deut 27:26. As Scott states, most scholars have interpreted Paul as arguing that keeping the law entirely is impossible.[68] If E. P. Sanders is correct, no Jew in the Second Temple period believed that one was always able to keep the entire law. The system of repentance and atonement addressed the problem of human sin. If this were true, Scott wonders why Paul would think that people could fall under the law's curse.[69] Scott then rehearses seven other interpretations, isolating key problems with each position.

Basically dissatisfied with what he finds, Scott claims that one should read Deut 27:26 within the Hebrew Bible and Jewish traditions in order to arrive at a

67. James M. Scott, "For as Many as Are of Works of the Law Are under a Curse," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. Craig Evans and James Sanders; JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 187–221.

68. Ibid., 188.

69. Ibid., 189.

better explanation of Paul's thought and argument. He maintains that one must in this instance view this single verse within the whole context of Deut 27–32.[70] Deuteronomy informed Israel that obedience to the law would lead to the blessings of life in the land. Disobedience, however, would bring curses that could escalate to exile if the people's sin continued. At this point Scott's arguments run in a pattern similar to the books that have appeared on penitential prayer, including my own. Deuteronomy 30 explains that God will lift the curse of exile when the people who are in exile repent—thus the sin–exile–restoration pattern (SER).[71] As is now well known since Scott's 1993 essay, Deuteronomic theology is foundational for penitential prayers. As I have shown elsewhere, penitential prayers and penitential literary contexts may even explicitly refer to the curses "clinging" (דבק) to the people:[72]

> So the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses . . . have been poured out upon us. . . . (Dan 9:11b)
>
> So to this day there have clung to us the calamities and the curse that the Lord declared through his servant Moses. . . . (Bar 1:20)
>
> All those calamities with which the Lord threatened us have come upon us. . . . And the Lord has kept the calamities ready, and the Lord has brought them upon us. . . . (Bar 2:7-8)
>
> . . . [S]o that the calamities have clung to us. . . . (Bar 3:4)
>
> For that reason you have poured on us your rage [and] your [jealou]sy with all the intensity of your anger. And clung to us. . . . (4Q504 1–2 iii 10b–11a)[73]

These texts from penitential prayer probably developed this concept of the curses clinging to the people based on Deut 28:21, 60: "He will bring back upon you all the diseases of Egypt . . . and they shall cling (דבק) to you" (v. 60).[74] Along with this, Scott relies on the well-known article by Michael Knibb in which Knibb demonstrates that many Second Temple Jewish texts spoke about the exile as if it remained a reality, a position now widely and correctly held.[75]

All this evidence pushes Scott to read Gal 3:10 through the lenses of this

70. Ibid., 194–95.

71. Ibid., 196–97.

72. Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 77, 94, 151.

73. Translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 2, *4Q274-11Q31* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

74. Ibid., 94.

75. Ibid., 201, 213; Michael A. Knibb, "Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period," *HeyJ* 17 (1976): 254–72.

tradition about the "clinging" of the Deuteronomic covenantal curses and the continuation of the exile.[76] Scott asserts:

> He [Paul] could therefore confidently posit in Gal. 3.10 that the curse of Deut. 27.26 has not only come upon Israel historically but also that it continued to abide on the people to his day. To the questions "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?" (Gal 3.2; cf. v. 5), Paul was answering in effect that the former possibility is completely ruled out on the basis of Old Testament/Jewish tradition: the law did not bring the spirit, but rather a long-term curse on Israel.[77]

The implications of Scott's interpretation are significant for the rest of Galatians.[78] To summarize, the arrival of Christ becomes an eschatological event that takes place at the "fullness of time" (Gal 4:4)—comparable to the calculations of the end of the exile in Dan 9 and the *Damascus Document*. Born under the law (Gal 4:4), the Christ takes on himself the curse of the law through his death on the cross: "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (3:13). He "redeemed us from the curse of the law" (4:5)—that is, the Jews under the power of the era of its curse (4:5)—so that we might receive the "Spirit of the Son" in our hearts (4:6). Further, Christ fulfills the promise made to Abraham that through his seed the Gentiles would be blessed (3:15–18). This understanding of the "curse of the law" also matches perfectly with Paul's metaphor of being "imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed" (3:23), like one under the severe hand of the tutor (3:25).

Conclusions on Paul and the Penitential Tradition

Romans and Galatians contain several features that testify to the lingering impact of the penitential tradition on Paul. These penitential themes and vocabulary especially assist Paul as he debates issues related to the Jewish themes of disobedience, the covenant, the covenantal curses, the law, and repentance. Scott's analysis of the "curse of the law" in Galatians firmly places Paul among those who believed that the covenantal curses were clinging to the people (cf. Deut 28:21, 60; Bar 1:20; 3:4; 4Q504 1–2 iii 10–13). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ signaled an eschatological turning point for Paul, for Christ had broken the power of sin and had lifted the covenantal curses of the law that clung to the Jewish people. The present is the time for repentance and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's righteous promises. In the complicated arguments and rhetoric of Romans, establishing God's righteousness in the face

76. Scott, "Works of the Law," 213.

77. Ibid., 214–15.

78. This summary is mostly my own conclusions. For Scott's full explanation see "Works of the Law," 217–21.

of human sinfulness proves crucial for Paul, which is also a key concern in the penitential tradition. Occasionally in the arguments in Rom 2–3, phrases and ideas from the penitential tradition surface, as Paul draws on the character credo to speak of God's forbearance and goodness, which should lead to repentance.[79] Paul's notion in Romans that the Jewish people—his own people!—have as a whole not listened to his message of repentance causes him to accuse them of being impenitent, a frequent condemnation in the penitential traditions and the perspectives of Jewish penitential groups. Unlike *Jubilees* and sections of *1 Enoch*, Paul thought that the goodness of God's grace would eventually reach both Jews and Gentiles—not only a group *within* Israel (Rom 9–11)—fulfilling the eschatological prophetic vision that all flesh would join in praise to God (Rom 15).

The Practice of Confession in New Testament Texts

As I mentioned in my introduction, several New Testament texts contain confessions of sin, and I now turn to analyze these and determine their relationships to the penitential traditions of early Judaism and early Christianity. Again, evidence for the confessions is confined to just a few verses, and this greatly limits any conclusions. Still, the presence of these confessions in the practice of the early Christian community suggests a lingering vitality of the penitential traditions from early Judaism.

The Lord's Prayer

Although the Lord's Prayer is a Q text, I will treat it in this section of this essay as an example of the actual practice of confession of sin. The confession of sin, of course, comes in the petition: "Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us" in Luke 11:4 or "Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors" in Matt 6:12. Some have proposed reading the word "debt" to mean literally a "financial debt."[80] Cancellation of debt in ancient societies often formed part of the restructuring of a new era for the people, and the regulations of the jubilee year in Deut 15 also required the cancellation of debts.[81] Those who hold to this meaning for the petition believe that the early Christian movements in Galilee may have called their communities to practice remission of debt as part of life in the kingdom of God and the establishment of the renewed covenantal community. As tempting as such an interpretation is, the older understanding of "debt" as "sin" still has much to commend it. First, if the original Q tradition read like Matthew's version of the petition, which uses "debt" twice, Luke or his

79. Boda, "Priceless Gain," 51–75.

80. For example, Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000),167; Horsley, *Whoever Hears You*, 266–68.

81. Rodney A. Werline, *Pray Like This: Understanding Biblical Prayer* (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2007), 93.

version of the Q tradition switched "debt" to "sin," perhaps an early clarification of the meaning of the metaphor. Second, immediately after the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, the evangelist places a version of the Marcan saying about the importance of an individual forgiving others so that God will forgive the individual (Mark 11:25–26).[82] Therefore, the author of Matthew also understood the word "debt" as a metaphor for sin. Thus, both Matthew and Luke seem to have understood the language in the petition to refer to a confession of sins.

Having decided on the meaning of "debts," what can be determined about the function of the confession of sin in the prayer? How might it fit with the other petitions in the prayer? Because other petitions in the Lord's Prayer relate to the coming kingdom of God, the petition for forgiveness may function somewhat like the material examined above in the discussion about penitential movements in early Jewish texts such as *Jubilees*, *1 Enoch*, and the *Damascus Document*. That is, the petition for forgiveness is part of the penitential tenor of the Q community, which understood itself as an eschatological penitential group. Moreover, the arrival of God's kingdom, as requested in the opening petitions, brings God's judgment with it. Thus, the supplicant may simply ask for forgiveness in order to be prepared for that moment. Furthermore, forgiveness was to characterize life within the Q community.

A consideration of the petition for forgiveness with the petition that follows—"Do not bring us to the time of trial" (πειρασμός)—raises other often unexplored interpretive possibilities. Matthew follows this request with "and deliver us from the evil one." These two petitions imagine that the eschatological era contains threats from demonic forces, an idea that occurs often in Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic texts. In an earlier essay, I explored the place of confessions of sin in apotropaic prayer—prayers asking for protection from demons—in the Qumran scrolls. David Flusser has listed the Lord's Prayer among his examples of apotropaic prayers because it combines a confession with a petition for protection from demonic powers.[83] Interestingly, in the Q temptation scene Jesus quotes Ps 91:11–12 to the devil (Luke 4:10–11; Matt 4:6), a psalm that functioned as an apotropaic prayer in the Second Temple period. Since Q taps into this apotropaic prayer tradition in the temptation scene, the possibility exists that the petition for deliverance in the time of testing may also bear the influence of this apotropaic tradition, but determining the extent of this relationship is fraught with difficulties. Apotropaic prayers seem to exhibit little or no influence from the penitential prayers that come out of the Deuteronomic-Levitical traditions (e.g., Ezra 9:5–15; Neh 1:4–11; 9:6–37; Dan 9:3–19; Bar 1:15–3:8). Instead, apotropaic prayers appear to have arisen from individual lament psalms as they exhibit deep

82. This saying already exited in proverbial form in Sir 28:2. See Werline, *Pray Like This*, 93.

83. David Flusser, "Qumran and Jewish 'Apotropaic' Prayers," *IEJ* 16 (1966), 194–205; idem, "Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (ed. Michael E. Stone; CRINT; Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 560–61.

concern that individual sin leaves one vulnerable to demonic assaults. Thus, at a basic level they differ greatly from the corporate-oriented confession of the penitential prayers in the Deuteronomic-Levitical tradtion.[84]

Confessions and Illness, Confessions to One Another in Community

Many Jews and Christians in the Greco-Roman period connected sin and illness. One could find support for such ideas in Psalms and in an individualizing of Deuteronomic ideology. Thus, the disciples ask Jesus when they meet with a blind man, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind" (John 9:2). Paul also informs the Corinthians that their disrespect for one another at communal meals brings judgment upon the offenders when they partake of the Lord's Supper; participation must be accompanied by devotion to mutuality and care in community:

> For all who eat and drink [of the Lord's Supper] without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For that reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. (1 Cor 11:29–30)

Of interest here are comparisons between approaching the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper and coming into contact with the sancta, a consecrated sacrifice. One may wonder if Paul in his warnings about eating from the idol's table and the Lord's table in 1 Cor 10:16–22 implies that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice.[85] Paul Bradshaw asserts that Paul conceived of the Lord's Supper in terms of a communion-sacrifice meal, patterned after Israelite and Jewish sacrifices that were eaten by a community of people as was the Passover.[86] Perhaps this would cause Paul to approach the meal as if it were the sancta.

Given these few examples, James' connection between confession of sin and illness is not surprising.

> Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. (Jas 5:14–16)

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84. For more on this, see Werline, "Reflections on Penitential Prayer," 218–20.

85. See Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache: A Commentary* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 197.

86. See Paul Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practices* (London: SPCK, 1996), 38–41. Aaron Milavec (*The Didache: Faith, Hope, & Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* [New York: Newman, 2003], 548) mentions this same idea of the sacrifice in relation to *Did*. 14.

Admittedly, nothing in this text points to the Deuteronomic penitential prayer tradition found in the texts mentioned throughout this essay. Further, the passage gives no information about the content of the confession of sins. The practice of having the elders anoint a sick individual with oil shows that the practice became a socioreligious institution in this segment of early Christianity. However, James also instructs the members of the church to confess their sins to one another so that they "may be healed." Could a sick individual, then, simply confess to another Christian and not the elders? Was confession practiced only by the ill, or did the community have a more general practice of confession? The lack of information in James leaves many questions unanswered.

Luke 17:3–4, which develops a Q tradition that structures life in the community (cf. Matt 18:15, 21–22), seems to provide additional evidence that some Christians late in the first century may have rebuked one another for sins and confessed their sins to one another, at least a confession of repentance to the offended person:

> Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. And if the same person sins against you seven times a day and turns back to you seven times and says "I repent," you must forgive.

Others note the similarities between this regulation in Q and various rules that helped to govern life at Qumran, especially 1QS 5:24–25.[87] The *Didache* also advises the members of the community that they should correct one another:

> Correct one another not in anger but in peace, as you have it [written] in the gospel and let no one speak to anyone who wrongs another—let him not hear [a word] from you—until he has repented. (15:3)[88]

The evidence suggests that members of some early Christian groups kept watch over one another, reproved one another, and engaged in repentance and confession to one another. The *Didache* also gives the following instructions for the Sunday eucharistic observance:

> Assembling on every Sunday of the Lord, break bread and give thanks, confessing your faults besides so that your sacrifice may be clean. Let no one engaged in a dispute with his comrade join you until they have been reconciled, lest your sacrifice be profaned. (*Did.* 14:1–2)

87. Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (CRINT 3.5; Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 352; Horsley, *Whoever Hears You*, 209. Cf. also *1 Clem.* 56.

88. Translations are from van de Sandt and Flusser, *Didache*, 15.

The *Didache*'s directions sound like an adaptation of Jesus words in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount:

> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. (Matt 5:23–24)

Early Christians may have adapted behavior from preparation for offering a sacrifice at the temple to participation at the Lord's Supper. This would require that the *Didache* understand the eucharistic meal as a sacrifice, a position that several scholars hold.[89] As suggested above, the idea may be implicit in 1 Cor 11. Missing from the *Didache* is a direct warning about illness or death coming upon one who does not approach the table having made a confession of sins and having made sure that one is reconciled to all members of the congregation.

Acts 8:20–22 also connects personal sin and potential judgment that can be avoided only if the offending individual repents. When the Jerusalem church hears of Philip's success in Samaria, the congregation sends Peter and John to the new converts. A former practitioner of magic, Simon, attempts to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from Peter and John. Peter immediately condemns him and tells Simon to pray lest some terrible judgment come upon him:

> But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God's gift with money! You have no part or share in this, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of our heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the fall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness. Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may happen to me." (Acts 8:20–22)

The reader of Acts knows the seriousness of Peter's warning, for earlier in Luke's story Ananias and Sapphira died when they lied to Peter (Acts 5:1–11).

1 John

Amid the instructions of the author of 1 John to the church stands a directive about confessing one's sin that exhibits clear parallels to the penitential prayer tradition.

89. See Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didachè: Instructions des Apôtres* (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1958). Cf. also Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 41.3 and *1 Clem.* 44.4, as suggested by Niederwimmer, *Didache,* 196–97, who calls the *Didache* the oldest explicit instance of speaking of the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice. See also, Milavec, *Didache,* 530.

> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we *confess our sins, he who is faithful and just* will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8–10)

Of special interest in these verses is the reference to God as "faithful and just" (πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος). As discussed above, Jewish penitential prayers from the Second Temple period generally include the declaration "You are righteous, O Lord," a *Gerichtsdoxologie*. It seems quite possible that the impact of the penitential tradition is apparent in these verses. Like the penitential prayer, the author of 1 John relies on God's character of righteousness and justice as the source of forgiveness, which is clearly expressed in the Hebrew Bible's character credo.[90] From the context, one cannot determine whether the church was to make this confession corporately in public worship or individually and privately.[91]

These verses and the context in which they stand exhibit several parallels to Paul's language in Rom 3. Paul coupled the word "true" (ἀληθής) with "righteous" and he also spoke of unfaithful humans and those who oppose God as "liars" (ψεύστης) (Rom 3:4–5):

> Although everyone is a liar (ψεύστης), let God be proved true (ἀληθής), as it is written,
>
> "So that you may be justified (δικαιωθῇς) in your words,
> and prevail in your judging."
>
> But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice (δικαιοσύνην, better "righteousness") of God, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us?

1 John contains similar language:

> If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in the darkness we lie and do not do what is true (ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν). (1 John 1:6)

> If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν). (1:8)

> If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar (ψεύστην). (1:10)

> Whoever says, "I have come to know him," but does not obey his commandments, is a liar (ψεύστης), and in such a person the truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια) does not exist. (2:4)

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90. See Boda, "Priceless Gain," 54–71.

91. See Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 32; R. Alan Culpepper (*1 John, 2 John, 3 John* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1985], 18) notes that confession in the epistle usually involves confessing that Jesus is the Christ.

Also like Paul in Rom 3:25, the author uses sacrificial metaphors and theology to speak of Jesus' death:[92]

> . . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin (τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας). (1 John 1:7)
>
> But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice (ἱλασμός) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (2:1b–2)

Jesus as the "advocate to the Father" is reminiscent of Christ the high priest in Heb 4:14–5:14. The language and concepts in 1 John invite more analysis of the influence of confession in Levitical texts, especially the Day of Atonement (Lev 16),[93] as the epistle takes up these cultic sacrificial terms in its instructions about confession.[94]

In 1 John, then, those who confess their sins embrace the effectiveness of Jesus Christ's sacrificial death as atonement for sin, and those who rely on Jesus Christ's faithfulness in the position of "advocate before the Father" experience forgiveness of sin.[95] While the author may not have drawn directly from penitential prayers or Romans, the ritual, language, and concepts obviously continued to have currency in early Christian commuities.

Conclusions

The evidence from Q and Paul testifies to the impact that the penitential tradition had on some sections of early Christian theology. The logia in Q suggest that the Q preachers under the influence of Deuteronomic ideology called for reform and repentance from the people. However, like the prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus, the preachers encountered opposition to their message, which in their opinion meant that the people of their generation remained unrepentant and continued in the behavior of the ancestors. The adherents to the message found in Q perceived themselves to be a faithful, penitent people living near the eschaton. In some ways, they resembled other penitential reform movements that emerged in Second Temple Judaism.

As Paul crafts his rhetoric in Rom 2–3 in order to condemn Jewish sinfulness, language from the domain of the penitential prayer tradition surfaces. Paul's demand that God be declared righteous is reminiscent of a *Gerichtsdoxologie* in a penitential prayer, and references to God's goodness recall the character credo so central to the prayer tradition. Further, Paul's penitential catena of lines

92. Strecker (*Johannine Epistles*, 32) also notes the parallel to Paul.
93. Comparisons might also be made with the *'asham* offering in Lev 5 and Num 5.
94. See also Culpepper, *1 John*, 18–19.
95. See also Strecker, *Johannine Epistles*, 33.

from several psalms may have been used in Jewish worship. Even though the catena does not resemble those Second Temple texts typically listed as penitential prayers, it testifies to the importance of penitence in the Judaism that Paul knew. According to Scott's analysis of the curse of the law in Galatians, Paul, like many Jewish authors in the Second Temple period, believed that the curses of the law as spelled out in Deut 27–28 maintained their grip on the people of Israel. By holding this position, Paul stands especially close to the penitential prayer tradition, which interpreted the problems that the Jews continued to face in the Second Temple period as evidence that the covenantal curses were still activated.

As part of the Q material, the Lord's Prayer fits well into the penitential elements of the sayings in this tradition. The prayer in part expressed the penitential mood of the community, which was thought to be lacking in the Jews around them. In a sense, through the Lord's Prayer the Q community understood itself as separate from the rest of perpetually impenitent Israel. The directions about confession of sin in 1 John 1 share several features with the penitential prayer tradition, and with Paul's language in Rom 3. The author of 1 John also couples these directions with metaphors that depict Jesus Christ's death as a sacrifice. Here one certainly wishes for more information and for the content of the confession itself so that the function of confession could be clearer. James 5 not only connects sin and illness, but it also indicates that early Christians confessed to one another and rebuked one another for sins.

Did the penitential prayer tradition require a Jewish context in order to continue to have an impact on the theology of the early church? Certainly the adherents of the message in Q were Jews living in Judea who had heeded a call to reform. They did not cease being Jews and become something else. The presence of the penitential tradition in Paul is quite telling, for he draws on language and concepts from the penitential tradition in Romans and Galatians when he is addressing the Jews or issues related to Judaism. Outside of these texts the influences of this penitential tradition do not seem to be present in Paul. This is not surprising, since two generations ago Krister Stendahl recognized that Paul uses the phrase "righteousness of God" almost exclusively in Galatians and Romans.[96] How would Paul have used the penitential prayer traditions in relationship to Gentiles since the prayers are grounded in covenant theology? In Paul's view, the covenants belong to the Jews (Rom 9:4).

Over time the church became predominantly Gentile, and this must have had an effect on the use of the penitential prayer material. As Gentile Christians began to see themselves as distinct from Jews, the concepts of covenant and the covenant people were redefined. Christian supersessionism co-opted Deuteronomy's and the prophets' critiques of Israel so that the criticism became emblematic

96. Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 25–26.

of the Jews' persistent rebellion against God.[97] Such Christians did not look for a "renewed" covenant but held that they were recipients of a "new" covenant that was for them. Thus, the whole framework of Deuteronomic thought, so important to the penitential prayer tradition, in a sense ended in Christian thought in the Christian understanding of God's rejection of the Jewish people and the acceptance of the Gentile church.

The absence of penitential traditions in late-first- and early-second-century Christian texts may provide further evidence for my theories related to form criticism and ritual theory in my essay in volume 2 of *Seeking the Favor of God*. There I argued that people living within any particular culture communicate not simply with words but in larger patterns of speech. These patterns are not rules written down; they are simply embedded in the culture's language. Far from being restrained by these forms, a person constantly adapts patterns to new settings and may mix one pattern with another pattern. Either way, the result is something new. This is what makes language alive and grounded in the reality of life, and this testifies to the power of conventional language patterns. However, with every application and artful adaptation of a pattern of speech, earlier forms of the pattern may begin to disappear.

Since the New Testament contains no penitential prayers or direct citations of penitential prayer, but only artful adaptations of the tradition, the dissolution of the tradition may have become imminent at the end of the first-century C.E. When the allusions to the penitential prayer tradition in Q and Paul moved out of their Jewish contexts, the cultural linguistic base for "hearing" allusions to the tradition disappeared. This may well be the reason for the different direction that confession of sin takes in Christianity from the second century onward. The description of that phenomenon will be left to other essays in this volume.

97. See, for example, Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*.

The Emergence of Penitential Prayer in Early Christianity

Paul Bradshaw

"How can we who died to sin still live in it?" asks Paul in his Letter to the Romans (6:2). But some of them did, and Paul quickly developed a procedure in the churches that he founded for dealing with those who committed what was regarded as serious sin after they had been baptized. In 1 Cor 5 he instructs the community to assemble with the presence of his spirit and deliver a man who had been living with his father's wife "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5:5). And he warns them to separate themselves from Christians who are guilty of immorality or greed, or were idolaters, revilers, drunkards or robbers (1 Cor 5:11), just as elsewhere he had commanded his readers to keep away from any believers living in idleness (2 Thess 3:6, 14). It appears that it was out of this practice that the penitential disciplines of early Christianity developed.[1]

What, however, of less serious sin in the Christian community, of the kind that did not warrant such drastic measures? Here we know rather less about what went on in the first few centuries. Some early Christian writers in their comments on penitence and conversion appear only to have in mind pre-baptismal sin, and make no reference to failings after baptism. Others appear to refer solely to the post-baptismal sins that require episcopal intervention and the imposition of penitential disciplines and do not acknowledge the persistence of lesser faults among the members of the church, while still other writings are ambiguous with regard to the object of their remarks: though they may be treating the daily imperfections of the baptized, it is not obvious that this is so, and hence their evidence is not helpful to the building up of a picture of the existence of penitential prayer within early Christian congregations. Nor is it a subject that many other scholars have studied in any detail, and so here we shall be entering relatively uncharted waters.

1. For the development of what came to be known as the sacrament of penance, see James Dallen, *The Reconciling Community: The Rite of Penance* (New York: Pueblo 1986); Joseph A. Favazza, *The Order of Penitents: Historical Roots and Pastoral Future* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1988).

Earliest Signs

Some scattered references do exist among the earliest of Christian writings. There are a few New Testament texts that speak of prayer being made on behalf of those sinning, principally 1 John 5:16 ("If anyone sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal") and Jas 5:16 ("confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed"). There are two references in the *Didache* to the confession of sin in the assembly prior to the celebration of the Eucharist, which are being treated in detail in another essay in this collection and will therefore be passed over here. And there is mention in *1 Clement* of seeking forgiveness for sins that have been committed. Here the context is the expulsion of their leaders from office by some in the Corinthian church, and the author is writing from the church at Rome, apparently around 96 C.E., and appealing to those involved to acknowledge their wrongdoing rather than harden their hearts.

> The Lord, brothers, is in need of nothing. He desires nothing of any one, except that confession be made to him. For, says the chosen one David, "I will confess to the Lord; and it will please him more than a young bullock which has horns and hoofs. Let the poor see it, and be glad" [Ps 69:30–32]. And again he says, "Sacrifice to God a sacrifice of praise, and pay your vows to the Most High. And call upon me in the day of your trouble, and I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me" [Ps 50:14–15]. For "the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit" [Ps 51:17]. (*1 Clem*. 52)

The quotation of the verse from Ps 51 is interesting here in view of its later prominence in Christian daily prayer. Although apparently by another author and from a different and presumably somewhat later context, the document known as *2 Clement* also calls upon Christians to practice repentance (see, e.g., 8, 13, 16–17).

The Third Century

When we reach third-century Christian authors, references to penitential prayer become a little more plentiful and appear in the various treatises on prayer that have survived from this period. Thus, Tertullian, writing in North Africa at the beginning of the century and working through the clauses of the Lord's Prayer in his treatise *De oratione*, refers briefly to the clause "forgive us our sins," and appears to imply—though does not explicitly state—that his readers should engage in regular prayer for pardon, especially as he expected the Lord's Prayer to be recited whenever a person prayed (7; 10). In his treatise *De paenitentia* he enlarges upon the subject of penitence, but only in relation to the possibility of the remission of serious post-baptismal sin through the discipline of penance, and does not mention prayer for forgiveness of other sins. There is, however, a further

interesting passage in his treatise on prayer, where he is discussing whether one should stand or kneel to pray. He asks: "Who would hesitate every day to prostrate himself before God, at least in the first prayer with which we enter on the daylight?" (*De oratione* 23.3). This seems to suggest that it was customary, in his region at least, to begin each morning's prayer with some form of expression of penitence that required kneeling as its accompaniment.

In the similar treatise written by Cyprian of Carthage around a half century later, the author more obviously suggests that regular penitential prayer is needed.

> How necessarily, how providently and salutarily, are we admonished that we are sinners, since we are compelled to entreat for our sins, and while pardon is asked for from God, the soul recalls its own consciousness of sin! Lest any one should flatter himself that he is innocent, and by exalting himself should more deeply perish, he is instructed and taught that he sins daily, in that he is bidden to entreat daily for his sins. (*De Dom. orat.* 22)

Such practices do not appear to have been confined to North Africa. In the anonymous Syrian church order known as the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, the author, having asserted that there is no one without sin, is primarily concerned with those who have committed serious sins that require episcopal intervention, but suggests in an allusion to the Lord's Prayer that all Christians need regularly to pray for pardon: "And again he taught us that we should be constantly praying at all times and saying, 'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors'" (7). The theologian Origen, in his treatise on prayer, insists that kneeling is the necessary posture when praying for forgiveness (*De oratione* 31.3), and that penitence is one of four topics that ought to feature regularly in everyone's prayer—following praise and thanksgiving and before intercession: "After thanksgiving it seems to me that he ought to blame himself bitterly before God for his own sins and then ask, first for healing that he may be delivered from the habit that brings him to sin and, second, for forgiveness of the sins that have been committed" (33.1).[2]

Fourth-Century Daily Prayer

In the light of these earlier references, we would naturally expect that among the more extensive writings on prayer and liturgical practice that survive from the fourth century the theme of penitence would be much more prominent, especially in the changed circumstances in which Christianity then found itself, with

2. English translation from *Origen*, translation and introduction by Rowan A. Greer (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 169.

many new adherents lacking the same high degree of ethical motivation and testing that had marked earlier converts.[3] But this is not quite the case.

On the one hand, the need for a penitential aspect to daily prayer is strongly stressed by a number of Christian authors of the period. John Chrysostom provides an excellent example of this when he dwells on it at some length in his instructions to candidates for baptism written around 390 C.E.:

> And I urge you to show great zeal by gathering here in the church at dawn to make your prayers and confessions to the God of all things, and to thank him for the gifts he has already given. Beseech him to deign to lend you from now on his powerful aid in guarding this treasure; strengthened with this aid, let each one leave the church to take up his daily tasks. . . . However, let each one approach his daily task with fear and anguish, and spend his working hours in the knowledge that at evening he should return here to the church, render an account to the Master of his whole day, and beg forgiveness for his faults. For even if we are on guard ten thousand times a day, we cannot avoid making ourselves accountable for many different faults. Either we say something at the wrong time, or we listen to idle talk, or we think indecent thoughts, or we fail to control our eyes, or we spend time in vain and idle things that have no connection with what we should be doing. This is the reason why each evening we must beg pardon from the Master for all these faults. This is why we must flee to the loving-kindness of God and make our appeal to him. (*Baptismal Instructions* 8.17–18)[4]

On the other hand, this penitential tone does not appear to be reflected in the actual contents of the daily services in which ordinary Christians took part—what are termed by scholars "cathedral offices" as distinct from monastic hours of prayer. Nearly all accounts of the forms that morning and evening prayer then took lack any reference to the occurrence of an expression of penitence within them and instead imply that they focused exclusively on praise and intercession. Thus, for example, Eusebius of Caesarea, writing in the first half of the fourth century and our first witness to the now public celebration of the morning and evening times of prayer, speaks of "hymns, praises, and truly divine delights" being offered to God at those hours, and implies that Ps 141 was used regularly in the evening (*Comm. in Ps.* 64.10) and elsewhere that Ps 63 was its counterpart in the morning (*Comm. in Ps.* 142.8); the pilgrimage diary kept by the nun Egeria of her visit to Jerusalem in the 380s mentions only that psalms and hymns and intercessions were used in the daily services there (*Itinerarium* 24) but describes them as being always "suitable, appropriate, and relevant" to the hour of their celebration (25.5); and a Syrian church order from the same period, *Apostolic*

3. See Michel Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries* (New York: Sadlier, 1979), 78–111.

4. English translation from P. W. Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1963), 126–27.

Constitutions, fleshes out the contents a little more fully, stating explicitly that Ps 63 was used each morning and Ps 141 each evening, and providing full texts of the intercessory prayers for those services (2.59; 8.35–39).

John Chrysostom admitted that Ps 141, which he said was sung every day, was appropriate to the evening, but claimed:

> Not for this reason, however, did the fathers choose this psalm, but rather they ordered it to be said as a salutary medicine and forgiveness of sins, so that whatever has dirtied us throughout the whole length of the day, either in the marketplace or at home or wherever we spend our time, we get rid of it in the evening through this spiritual song. For it is indeed a medicine that destroys all those things.
>
> The morning psalm is of the same sort. . . . For it kindles the desire for God, and arouses the soul and greatly inflames it, and fills it with great goodness and love. . . . Where there is love of God, all evil departs; where there is remembrance of God there is oblivion of sin and destruction of evil. (*Comm. in Ps* 140.1)[5]

It does not seem likely that this explanation for the choice of these psalms is historically accurate. Psalm 141 is a plea not to be tempted to commit sin, rather than a confession of sins already committed. Had the intention been to articulate the latter, more suitable psalms exist that could have been selected, but this is one of the very few that refer to evening. Similarly, the Septuagint translation of Ps 63 refers to "early" in its first verse and to "in the mornings" in v. 6, which would make it seem suitable for the morning. Hence Chrysostom's interpretation looks very much like reading his own spirituality into the rite.

Of course, the absence of any explicit reference in the various descriptions cannot of itself be considered conclusive evidence that penitence had not yet made its way into the rites, as these sources tend to be rather brief and do not purport to give every detail. None of them, for instance, explicitly mentions the use of the psalms of praise, Pss 148–150, which scholars generally believe formed the core of daily morning prayer throughout most, if not all, of the ancient Christian world.[6] Thus, it is conceivable that some penitential prayer did exist in the rites, but was simply not mentioned. However, the reconstructions that have been made by scholars of the oldest strata of some later liturgical texts do lend support to the supposition that there were no penitential elements at the time.[7] Only in Cappadocia is there evidence for the use of the penitential Ps 51 at the beginning of each day; and the significance of that anomaly will be considered a little later.

5. Quoted by Robert F. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1986), 42–43.

6. See ibid., 191–209.

7. See, for example, Gabriele Winkler's reconstruction of the ancient Armenian evening office in her essay "Über die Kathedralvesper in der verschieden Riten des Ostens und Westens," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 16 (1974): 53–102, here 78–80.

Monastic Influence

What, then, are we to make of the apparent discrepancy between the penitential disposition towards daily prayer recommended by Christian authors and the seemingly almost total absence of the expression of penitence in the early liturgical rites themselves? The answer appears to lie in the ascetic and monastic movements that developed in the early part of the fourth century, as Christianity moved out from under the risk of persecution and became socially acceptable. Those who found its standards becoming too lax and lacking the sort of challenge for which they were looking tended to head for the deserts of Egypt and Syria in order to live a rigorously ascetic life, set apart from the rest of the church. Their existence became one of almost ceaseless prayer, broken only by the briefest of intervals for sleep and food. While the content of the meditation on which their praying was based was the recitation of all 150 canonical psalms, in their biblical order, psalm alternating with prayer all day long, yet their prayer itself was suffused with a strongly penitential character as they wrestled against the temptations and power of evil.

This same outlook toward prayer seems to have continued even when the desert ascetics formed themselves into monastic communities there. Thus, for example, the *Regulations of Horsiesios*, when speaking about the daily morning and evening assemblies in which this same alternation of reading and prayer occurred, included this counsel for the moments of prayer: "Then once we are prostrate on our face, let us weep in our hearts for our sins" (8). This attitude was also adopted by the many pious individuals and small groups of ascetics who remained in the cities but wanted something more demanding for their daily diet than mere attendance at morning and evening prayer with other Christians. What the bishops to whom they turned for guidance recommended was the observance of the full round of hours of daily prayer that had been the common practice of ordinary Christians in the third century but was falling into neglect in the changed circumstances of the fourth. Because many of these bishops had either spent time as monks in the desert themselves or had been influenced by the spirituality of that tradition, it was very likely they who encouraged a more penitential approach to daily prayer among all Christians (just as we saw in the case of John Chrysostom above, who had lived under the tutelage of a monk earlier in his life), and incorporated it into the rules of life that they drew up for the pious.

Thus, Basil of Caesarea in his *Longer Rules* counsels that at the end of the day at evening prayer not only should thanksgiving be offered for what the worshipers have received during the day or for what they have done rightly, but also "confession made of what we have failed to do—an offence committed, be it voluntary or involuntary, or perhaps unnoticed, either in word or deed or in the very heart—propitiating God in our prayers for all our failings" (37.4).[8]

8. English translation from Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 86.

An even more pronounced penitential tone suffuses the directions about prayer in the anonymous Greek treatise *De virginitate*, once attributed to Athanasius but now thought to be of Cappadocian origin and dating from around 370 C.E., which directs its readers to pray at the traditional hours of the day (in the morning, at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, in the evening and in the middle of the night) though adding to that pattern a vigil between midnight prayer and morning prayer. At the sixth hour the virgin is told to "make your prayers with psalms, weeping and petition, because at this hour the Son of God hung on the cross. At the ninth hour again in hymns and praises, confessing your sins with tears, supplicate God, because at that hour the Lord hanging on the cross gave up the spirit" (Pseudo-Athanasius, *De virginitate* 12). Similarly, for the prayer in the middle of the night and the vigil of psalmody that followed it, she is instructed: "first say this verse: 'At midnight I rose to praise you because of your righteous ordinances' [Ps 119:62], and pray and begin to say the fiftieth psalm [i.e., Ps 51] until you complete it, and let these things remain fixed for you every day. Say as many psalms as you can say standing, and after each psalm let there be a prayer and genuflection, confessing your sins with tears to the Lord and asking him to forgive you" (*De virginitate* 20).

It is interesting to observe the use of Ps 51 at what was for this group of female ascetics the beginning of their day, immediately after they had said their midnight prayer. This seems to be a continuation of the practice described by Tertullian of kneeling for "the first prayer with which we enter on the daylight" mentioned above. It is not surprising to find this tradition, which had once been intended for ordinary Christians, being preserved only within this "urban monastic" setting, for such groups were not the innovators but the conservatives in a Christian world that was changing around them.[9] However, whether the use of Ps 51 itself went back to Tertullian's day or whether the tradition known to him of beginning each morning's praying with a penitential prayer of some sort stabilized only at a later date into this particular psalm is impossible to know.

It is true that one other fourth-century source records Ps 51 as forming the beginning of morning prayer, but that is also of Cappadocian origin, a letter written by Basil about the same time as the *De virginitate*. He describes a vigil service that begins with penitence ("among us the people go at night to the house of prayer and in distress, affliction, and continual tears making confession to God, they at last rise from their prayers and begin to sing psalms") and concludes at dawn, when "they all together, as with one voice and one heart, raise the psalm of confession to the Lord, each making for himself his own expressions of penitence" (*Ep.* 207.3–4). The mention of "the people" might seem to suggest that he is describing the practice of ordinary Christians here. However, it is very probable

9. See Paul F. Bradshaw, "Cathedral vs. Monastery: The Only Alternatives for the Liturgy of the Hours?" in *Time and Community: In Honor of Thomas J. Talley* (ed. J. Neil Alexander; Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1990), 123–36, here 131–32.

that these particular people were for the most part the particularly devout: it is unlikely that many of the average churchgoers of this period would have regularly spent a night in corporate prayer, especially as Chrysostom complains that his congregations could not be persuaded even to engage in the traditional hours of prayer at the third, sixth, and ninth hours or to study the Bible at home.[10] This suggests that Ps 51 may after all not have been a customary part of normal "cathedral" usage but was introduced under the influence of ascetics.

Support is lent by some other sources to the supposition that it was a later addition. John Cassian in an account of the monastic prayer he had experienced in Bethlehem describes how in his own day (the 380s) an extra morning service had been added to the traditional daily round so that the monks should not go back to bed for too long after they had finished the nightly vigil and the original morning office (which centered on Pss 148–150) but should instead get up again for this service, which, he says, consisted of Ps 51, 63, and 90 (*De inst. coen.* 3.4–6). These psalms thus appear to have been imported as secondary elements from other regions where they were already associated in some way with the morning and were not part of the indigenous tradition. Similarly, John Chrysostom does not seem to have been familiar with the regular use of Ps 51 in the mornings at Antioch. Not only does he not mention it explicitly, in spite of his emphasis on the penitential dimension of daily prayer, but when he is describing the pattern of prayer followed by monastic groups there, he refers to Pss 148–150 as forming the conclusion of the nightly vigil, and says that after a short period of rest, "as soon as the sun is up, or rather even long before its rise, [they] rise up from their beds . . . and having made one choir . . . with one voice all, like as out of one mouth, they sing hymns to the God of all, honoring him and thanking him for all his benefits" (*Hom. in Matt.* 68.3). This seems to indicate that this service began immediately with praise rather than penitence.[11]

Cassian even adds that "throughout Italy" Ps 51 came after Pss 148–150 each morning (*De inst. coen.* 3.6) and not before them as one might have expected. Robert Taft believes he must be mistaken here,[12] but if Cassian were accurately recording the practice, then that sequence too might imply that Ps 51 was at first a secondary appendage to the rite and only subsequently found its place at the very beginning of the service.

Later Developments

It is only later that we see signs of a somewhat pronounced penitential dimension in the rites of morning and evening prayer more generally, apparently as the influence of monastic spirituality took greater hold. Thus, eventually Ps 51 tended to

10. See John Chrysostom, *De Anna sermo* 4.5; *Hom. in Matt.* 2.5.
11. *Pace* Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 82–83.
12. Ibid., 128.

be inserted at the beginning of the morning office throughout the ancient Christian world, although some exceptions seem to have persisted. In southern Gaul in the monastic rules of Caesarius of Arles and his successor Aurelian in the sixth century, it still came at the beginning of nocturns, as it had done in *De virginitate*; and the Council of Barcelona (ca. 540 C.E.) directed that it be said "before the canticle" at the morning office (canon 1)—the need for such a direction being a sure sign that its use was still not yet universal in Spain.[13]

A penitential element was eventually added also to the evening office, especially in the East. Before the end of the fourth century, the morning and evening services had come to be understood as the spiritual counterpart and fulfillment of the morning and evening sacrifices of the first covenant (see, e.g., John Chrysostom, *Expos. in Ps.* 140.3), and from the fifth century onward a literal offering of incense began to make an appearance in some regional rites in accordance with Exod 30:7–8.[14] While the offering of incense in the morning offices was generally interpreted as symbolizing the prayers of the saints rising to God, as it is in Rev 8:3–4, in the evening it came to be thought of in a number of traditions as an expiatory oblation for the sins of the people, as in Num 16:46–47, and attracted to itself substantial penitential material.[15]

Penitential Days?

Even though, to begin with, penitential prayer does not seem to have featured much in the ordinary daily services of the "cathedral" tradition, what about those particular days that were set apart in the annual calendar for fasting? Were they also days of penitential prayer? As early as the *Didache*, Christians were instructed to observe every Wednesday and Friday as fast days, so that they would not be like "the hypocrites" (i.e., the Jews) who fasted on Mondays and Thursdays (*Did.* 8.1). Opinion has been divided as to whether these days were chosen by Jewish Christians simply to distinguish themselves from other Jews or whether this was already a variant Jewish tradition, perhaps linked to the solar calendar of the Essenes.[16] The same pattern is mentioned also in some other early Christian sources, indicating that it was not just a peculiarity of the tradition behind the *Didache* but was more widely practiced.[17] The various references to it, however, do not

13. Ibid., 107, 158.

14. The earliest explicit reference seems to be Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria, Quaestiones in Exodum 28, written sometime after 453 C.E.

15. For further details, see Gabriele Winkler, "L'aspect penitential dans les offices du soir en Orient et en Occident," in *Liturgie et rémission des péchés: conférences Saint Serge XXe Semaine d'Études Liturgiques* (Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae, Subsidia 3; Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1975), 273–93.

16. See, for example, Annie Jaubert, "Jésus et le calendrier de Qumran," *NTS* 7 (1960): 1–30; Willy Rordorf, *Sunday* (London: SCM, 1968), 183–86.

17. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.12; Origen, *Hom. in Lev.* 10.2.

imply that it had a particularly penitential character. Among Latin authors, the days were known as *stationes*, times of being "on sentry duty" or "on watch," suggesting eschatological vigilance rather than penitence as such.[18] Although special services came to be held on those days, usually services of the word at the ninth hour, being the end of the normal working day after which the fast would be broken and the main meal of the day consumed, these do not seem to have contained any particularly penitential elements as far as we can judge from the limited evidence available.[19]

As for the season of Lent, one of the oldest extant references to a period of forty days does concern those who were undergoing penitential discipline, but the emphasis both in this case and in other early sources falls on the commemoration and symbolic sharing in Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness and on resisting temptation rather than on contrition for sins.[20] Although some may argue that fasting necessarily always involved some element of penitence, once again this is not a note that receives any particular emphasis in the early Lenten liturgical rites themselves, as far as we know them.

The Eucharist

Perhaps the most surprising discovery of all is that penitential prayers appear to be almost completely lacking from early eucharistic rites. Although our very ancient source, the *Didache*, referred to above, seemed to have implied the need for confession of sins within the assembly prior to a celebration of that rite, reference to such a practice is not found again in this connection. Any indication of a penitential note is absent from the description of eucharistic practice given by Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century (*1 Apol.* 65–67), although that might be accounted for by the fact that his description was intended for a pagan audience and so would not necessarily have included every detail of the rite. But it is also absent from all other references to the Eucharist until the Lord's Prayer, with its petition for forgiveness, makes its first appearance in some, but apparently not all, eucharistic rites in the second half of the fourth century, being placed after the eucharistic prayer and before communion.[21] Robert Taft has suggested

18. *Shepherd of Hermas* Simil. 5.1; Tertullian, *De or.* 19; *De ieiun.* 10.

19. See Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (London: SPCK, 1981), 91–92.

20. See Maxwell E. Johnson, "Preparation for Pascha? Lent in Christian Antiquity," in *Passover and Easter: The Symbolic Structuring of Sacred Seasons* (ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 36–54, here 44–49.

21. In the *Mystagogical Catecheses* attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem (5.11); apparently alluded to by Ambrose of Milan (*De sacramentis* 5.24); and at Antioch according to John Chrysostom. See F. Van de Paverd, "Anaphoral Intercessions, Epiclesis and Communion Rites in John Chrysostom," *OCP* 49 (1983): 303–39.

that the reason for the addition of that prayer to the Eucharist at this time was precisely in order to introduce a petition for forgiveness into the liturgy in association with the new notes of fear and awe that were beginning to be attached to the Eucharist in the course of the fourth century.[22] But a sense of unworthiness to receive the Eucharist had been prevalent among Christians since much earlier in the century and had led many to abstain from communion for long periods of time—in some cases as much as a year or more.[23] Why, then, was penitence so slow to find a place in eucharistic celebrations, and why, when it did, was it such a limited expression as a line in the Lord's Prayer?

It seems most improbable that Christians regularly practiced some form of confession or penitential prayer before or within their eucharistic celebration throughout this long period, but somehow no one ever mentioned it in their writings about the Eucharist. Yet, given the various references in early Christian writers to the need for ask for forgiveness for one's sins, it seems odd that penitential prayer was so late in emerging in connection with this central rite. Could it have something to do with the ancient tradition of celebrating the Eucharist only on Sundays? There was a general prohibition against both fasting and kneeling for prayer on that day of the week.[24] If kneeling was thus forbidden, that meant that penitential prayer could not be offered. It is interesting to observe that ancient forms of morning prayer that begin with Ps 51 on weekdays generally do not do so on Sundays. It is usually replaced on that day by the canticle *Benedicite* (Dan 3:35–68), a song of creation especially appropriate to the first day of the week.[25] This would seem to support the hypothesis that Sunday was considered an inappropriate day for penitential prayer. As a result, the absence of any opportunity for confession and absolution before receiving communion, unless one entered upon the rigorous process of canonical penance intended for truly serious sins, may well account for the prolonged abstinence from communion that we encounter being so often adopted at this period. And if lay people were commonly not receiving communion, that in turn may account also for the continuing lack of penitential prayers within eucharistic rites for several centuries afterwards, even when the Eucharist was celebrated on weekdays.

Thus, although brief penitential notes are occasionally sounded in some eucharistic prayers that may go back at least in part to the fourth century (e.g., a petition for forgiveness of sins in the *Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, a reference to the worshipers as being "sinners and unworthy and wretched" in the Egyptian version of the *Anaphora of Basil*, and a similar reference to "us sinners" in the

22. See Robert F. Taft, "The Lord's Prayer in the Eucharistic Liturgy: When and Why?" *Ecclesia Orans* 14 (1997): 137–55, esp. 153.

23. See, for example, John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Ep. ad Heb.* 17.7; Ambrose, *De sacramentis* 5.25. For discussion of the reasons for such abstentions, see Paul F. Bradshaw, "The Reception of Communion in Early Christianity," *Studia Liturgica* 37 (2007): 164–80.

24. For the earliest references to this rule, see Tertullian, *De corona* 3; *De oratione* 23.

25. Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 89.

Roman Canon of the Mass),[26] penitential prayers proper do not appear in the texts of eucharistic rites until the ninth or tenth centuries in either East or West. These, however, were merely the formalization of an older tradition of informal preparatory prayers that clergy and other communicants had engaged in for some centuries prior to this, and they are found both at the very beginning of the rite and immediately prior to the reception of communion.[27] Because laity now made their communion infrequently, they did not need to be involved in these devotions on a regular basis, and, on those few occasions when they did receive communion, especially in the West, they were increasingly expected to make their confession and receive absolution well beforehand each time, as well as undertaking a prior period of fasting or abstinence. Later still, however, pre-communion devotions for the laity of a penitential kind were introduced into the rite itself.[28]

Conclusion

Thus, there appears to have been a dichotomy between the counsel offered by many Christian leaders and spiritual writers in the early centuries of Christianity and its emerging liturgical traditions. While the former strongly advocated an awareness of sin within every individual that needed frequent confession, the rites themselves focused almost exclusively on praise and intercession. It was only very gradually, initially apparently through the increasing influence of monasticism on liturgy, that some expression of penitence began to appear both in the daily services and in the Eucharist.

26. For English translations of these prayers, see R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed* (London: Collins, 1975), 28, 31, 108.

27. See further Robert F. Taft, "Byzantine Communion Rites II: Later Formulas and Rubrics in the Ritual of Clergy Communion," OCP 67 (2001): 275–352; Annewies van den Hoek and Stefanos Alexopoulos, "The Endicott Scroll and Its Place in the History of Private Communion Prayers," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 60 (2006): 145–88; Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite* (New York: Benziger, 1951), 1:290–311; 2:343–50.

28. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:363–64, 367–74.

Repentance and Prayer in the *Didache*

Carsten Claussen

Over the last few years there has been a growing interest in the *Gattung* of penitential prayer.[1] The main sources for this research have been the postexilic prayers in Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 1:5–11; 9:6–37; and Dan 9:4–19.[2] There is a consensus now that these are the first fully developed penitential prayers in the Judeo-Christian tradition.[3] However, as one proceeds into the intertestamental, early Christian, and early rabbinic literature, it becomes more difficult to trace this genre.[4] This has resulted in the pressing need for a shift in methodology because the original form-critical approach with its special interest in genre analysis is able to identify only a fairly limited number of penitential prayers. Therefore, as Samuel Balentine has noted, there is a move "to an increasing reliance on traditio-historical investigation."[5] Rodney Werline has thus extended his investigation to a number of texts that are, in terms of their genre, not prayers but "refer to penitential prayer or include penitential vocabulary."[6] Behind such texts he locates "penitential reform movements in the Second Temple era that call fellow Jews to repen-

1. Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden: Brill, 1998); Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 14; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999); Mark J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9* (BZAW 277; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999); Richard J. Bautch, *Developments in Genre between Post-exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament* (SBLAcBib 7; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

2. See Samuel E. Balentine, "'I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask,'" in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1–20, here 1.

3. Balentine, "I Was Ready," 12.

4. See ibid.; Bautch, *Developments*, 171: "Although the confession of sin becomes one of the best attested prayer forms in the Second Temple Period and serves as a hallmark of postexilic piety, its predominance waxes and wanes."

5. Balentine, "I Was Ready," 11.

6. Werline, *Prayer*, 3–4: "Examples of these phenomena occur in *Jubilees* 1 and 23, the Animal Apocalypse and Apocalypse of Weeks in *1 Enoch*, and the *Testament of Moses*" (4).

tance," for example, the Qumran community.[7] Yet another religious group that has so far not been dealt with in the context of "penitential prayer" can be identified behind a document which is called the *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, most often referred to as the *Didache*.[8]

The *Didache*

Although a number of ancient Christian authors—Eusebius and Athanasius of Alexandria, among others[9]—refer to the so-called *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, its text had been lost probably after the fourth or fifth century until 1873, when the Greek Orthodox theologian Philotheos Bryennios discovered a manuscript of the *Didache*. In the library of the Holy Sepulcher at Constantinople he found a collection of texts that contained, among others, the Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων ("teaching of the twelve apostles).[10] This text was finally published in 1883.[11]

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7. Ibid., 4, 109–59.

8. A longer title also appears at the beginning of the text: "The Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles." Greek and English editions are: J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers: Revised Greek Texts with Introductions and English Translations* (London: Macmillan, 1891; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984; 2nd ed., ed. Michael W. Holmes, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992; rev. ed. 1999.); Bart D. Ehrman, ed. and trans., *Didache* (vol. 1 of *The Apostolic Fathers*; LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003). The latter edition was the main one used for preparing this paper, although I have taken the liberty of changing parts of his translations at times. More recent editions and commentaries of the *Didache* are Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didachè: Instructions des Apôtres* (ÉBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1958); Robert A. Kraft, *Barnabas and the Didache* (vol. 3 of *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary*; ed. R. M. Grant; New York: Thomas Nelson, 1965); Klaus Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet* (Schriften des Urchristentums 2; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984); Kurt Niederwimmer, *Die Didache* (Kommentar zu den Apostolischen Vätern 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989; 2nd ed. 1993); Willy Rordorf and André Tuilier, *La doctrine des Douze Apôtres (Didachè): Introduction, texte, traduction, notes, appendice et index* (SC 148; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1978, 2nd ed. 1998); Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (CRINT 3.5; Assen: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Faith, Hope, & Life of the Earliest Christian Communities, 50–70 C.E.* (New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Newman, 2003). Extensive bibliographies and numerous essays can be found in Clayton N. Jefford, ed., *The* Didache *in Context: Essays on Its Text, History and Transmission* (NovTSup 77; Leiden: Brill, 1995); Jonathan A. Draper, ed., *The Didache in Modern Research* (AGJU 37; Leiden: Brill, 1996).

9. Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 4–5; see also his summary of possible quotations of the *Didache* in early Christian literature (6–18).

10. This is still our only complete manuscript of the *Didache* (apart from the missing lines at the end). However, today there are also a small number of fragments (*P. Oxy.* 1782) and parts of a Coptic (Br. Mus. Or. 9271), an Ethiopic, and maybe a Georgian (?) version. See Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 19–27.

11. Philotheos Bryennios, Διδαχὴ τῶν δῶδεκα ἀποστόλων (Constantinople: S. I. Boutura, 1883).

Immediately the *Didache* was regarded as one of the most important literary artifacts of early Christianity outside the New Testament. Only a year after the *editio princeps*, Adolf Harnack published an edition.[12] His interpretation of the *Didache* as a source of early church order became most influential,[13] and this became the foundation for many decades of future research on the offices and structures of the early Christian communities.[14] This use (and sometime abuse)[15] of the *Didache* obscured the fact that the form (*Gattung*) "church order" (*Kirchenordnung*)[16] is not really an apt description of the majority of its text. This becomes obvious when one looks at the contents of the whole document. *Didache* 1 begins by presenting its readers with a fundamental ethical choice (*Did.* 1:1): "There are two paths, one of life and one of death, and the difference between the two paths is great."[17]

What follows is the "Manual of the Two Ways,"[18] which also appears in more or less similar versions in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 18–20, in the Latin *Doctrina Apostolorum*, the *Apostolic Constitutions* 4–13, the Arabic *Life of Shenute*, the *Syntagma doctrinae*, and the *Fides patrum*.[19] In addition to this, Jean-Paul Audet

12. Adolf Harnack, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel nebst Untersuchungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts* (TUGAL 2, 1–2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1886).

13. Ibid., 88–158.

14. There are several overviews of the history of research from Harnack up to more recent constributions: Olof Linton, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung: Eine kritische Darstellung* (Uppsala universitets årsskrift; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1932); Ulrich Brockhaus, *Charisma und Amt: Die paulinische Charismenlehre auf dem Hintergrund der frühchristlichen Gemeindefunktionen* (Wissenschaftliche Taschenbücher 8; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1972); James T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

15. Harnack himself saw the *Didache* as the key to settling the dispute between the churches of the Reformation and the Roman Catholic Church on the question of church order.

16. See Paul Drews, *Kirchenordnungen* (ed. Edgar Hennecke; Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in Verbindung mit Fachgelehrten in deutscher Übersetzung und mit Einleitungen; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr; Leipzig: Paul Siebeck, 1904), 180–98, who presents the *Didache* under this heading and defines: "We understand by church order (*Kirchenordnung*) in the full sense of the word a collection of regulations, which are in force legally, regarding the constitution, the cult, the discipline and the whole further life of a certain district of the church" (180, translation mine).

17. This and the subsequent translations mainly follow Ehrman, *Didache*.

18. This title is used probably for the first time by C. Taylor, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles with Illustrations from the Talmud: Two Lectures on an Ancient Church Manual Discovered at Constantinople, Given at the Royal Institution of Great Britain on May 29th and June 6th, 1885* (Cambridge: Deighton Bell, 1886).

19. For an overview of the "Two Ways" in these texts, see Willy Rordorf, "An Aspect of Judeo-Christian Ethic: The Two Ways," in Draper, *Didache*, 148–64; Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 48–64.

was the first one to recognize the importance of the similarities of the Qumran *Rule of the Community* (1QS) to the "Manual of the Two Ways."[20]

The first of four separate sections of the document consists of two main subdivisions regarding "the way of life" (*Did.* 1:2–4:14) and the "way of death" (5:1–2). It concludes with a short parenetical epilogue that emphasizes the importance of the "Manual of the Two Ways" (6:1): "Take care that no one leads you astray from the path of this teaching, since that one teaches you apart from God." A short addition interprets this epilogue (6:2–3) by encouraging its addressees to "bear the entire yoke of the Lord" and thus to "be perfect" (6:2). This probably recalls the commandments of the Lord that the Didachist quoted earlier (1:3b–2:1). These first six chapters of ethical teaching set the agenda for the understanding of the document as a whole.

In the second section of the *Didache* the author turns to practical instructions concerning liturgical issues, the first of which is baptism (7:1–4). The rubrical title is (7:1): "But with respect to baptism, baptize as follows. Having said all these things in advance, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water." This provides the particular social setting (*Sitz im Leben*) for the preceding "Manual of the Two Ways" (chs. 1–6) as a pre-baptismal instruction for catechumens.[21] The following parts of this section deal with fasting (8:1),[22] the Lord's Prayer (8:2–3), and prayers with respect to the Lord's Supper (9:1–7) and perhaps concerning the matter of the ointment.[23]

At the beginning of the third section (11:1–15:4), which may be taken as a church order, everything that had been said so far becomes the criterion for evaluating the admonition (11:1): "And so, welcome anyone who comes and teaches you everything mentioned above."

The final chapters (16:1–8) deal with questions regarding hospitality toward and examination of wandering charismatics (11:3–13), instructions for communal worship (ch. 14) and for the election of bishops and deacons (15:1–2), followed by some general ethical remarks. The final chapter, *Did.* 16, which was probably not the original ending,[24] provides an eschatological perspective.

These very heterogeneous sections make it rather difficult to identify clearly the overall genre of the *Didache*. Apostles, prophets, and teachers are mentioned in *Did.* 11–13, and ch. 15 deals with the election of bishops and deacons. For the author, however, these chapters are not so much a matter of church order as of the rather pragmatic question of hospitality toward wandering charismatics

20. Jean-Paul Audet, "Affinités littéraires et doctrinales du 'Manuel de Discipline,'" *RB* 59 (1952): 219–38. See also Draper, *Didache*, 13–16.

21. This is stressed by Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 1; Wengst, *Didache*, 16–17; Rordorf and Tuilier, *Doctrine*, 30–32. Cf. a close parallel in *Did.* 11:1.

22. Cf. the pre-baptismal fasting in *Did*. 7:4.

23. Wengst, *Didache*, 57–59.

24. See Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 34–35.

and of the worthiness of officeholders.[25] Therefore, the designation of the work simply as "church order" is not justified. As the first eight chapters are mainly concerned with ethical ("Two Ways") and liturgical instructions, it seems better to regard the *Didache* as a Jewish-Christian work designated for the instruction of catechumens and as addressing newly converted Gentiles.[26] Its overall pragmatic approach comes to light when we assume that the *Didache* is a manual of instruction for one or more local house churches a long time before there was a canonical New Testament.[27]

From where does the text of the *Didache* come? Traditionally, the *Didache* has been regarded as a "generically mixed composition"[28] of quite diverse materials put together during different phases of development.[29] So far, however, literary- and source-critical approaches have not led to any consensus regarding the origin of the text.[30] More recently, a growing number of scholars[31] have returned to the assumption that a single author compiled a limited number of traditions. This is a view that was already quite prominent at a very early stage of research on the *Didache*.[32] For the most part, the question of the compositional history of

25. *Did.* 15:1: "And so, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons who are worthy of the Lord."

26. See Milavec, *Didache*, vii.

27. Harnack, *Lehre*, 32: "His [the author's] entire enterprise bears witness that there was no canon of the New Testament at the time when he wrote this document. One can *cum grano salis* maintain that this document should replace a whole canon of the New Testament, i.e. it should serve . . . the church as a 'new' document beside the OT" (translation mine).

28. Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 1.

29. For a highly sophisticated but very hypothetical reconstruction of the compositional history of the *Didache*, see, for example, A. J. P. Garrow, *The Gospel of Matthew's Dependence on the* Didache (JSNTSup 254; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 13–160.

30. G. Schöllgen ("The *Didache* as a Church Order: An Examination of the Purpose for the Composition of the *Didache* and Its Consequences for Its Interpretation," in Draper, *Didache*, 43–71) summarizes the present state of research: "It is significant that there is neither a consensus nor even only a limited number of types of solution between these sometimes extraordinarily complex theories of origin. Nearly every attempt to solve the problem stands by itself, and forms its own criteria for the supposed division of sources. So one cannot avoid the impression of arbitrariness, especially if even the smallest stylistic differences must serve as signs of a change of author" (65).

31. De Halleux, "Les ministères," 22; Pierre Nautin, "La composition de la 'Didachê' et son titre," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 155 (1959): 209–10; L. Alfonsi, "Aspetti della struttura letterarias della Διδαχή," in *Studi classici in onore di Quintino Cataudell* (Catania: Università di Catania, Facoltà di lettere e filosofia, 1972), 2:465–81, here 480–81; Wengst, *Didache*, 20–23; Rordorf and Tuilier, *Doctrine*, 17–18; Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 1: Schöllgen, "Didache," 64–67.

32. Harnack, *Lehre*, 24–63; R. Knopf, *Die Apostolischen Väter I: Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel: Die zwei Clemensbriefe* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1920), passim.

the text still remains unsolved. In historical perspective, this still leaves us with the *Didache* as a compilation of a number of units of tradition and redaction, and thus neither a precise dating nor a consensus regarding its place of origin can been reached.[33] The teaching of the "Two Ways" (chs. 1–6) may stem from the middle of the first century. Wandering charismatics (chs. 11–13) *and* elected deacons and bishops (ch. 15) may indicate a transitional phase, perhaps in the second half of the first century C.E. The separation from Judaism (cf. 8:1–2) may justify a date late in the first century C.E. A final redaction of the *Didache* around 100 C.E. as the earliest date seems quite probable, although this cannot be firmly established.[34]

Even more difficult is establishing the document's provenance; as one commentator writes: "Regarding provenance, we are completely in the dark."[35] On the one hand, the writing's early circulation in Egypt may indicate its origin there. On the other hand, if one assumes the wandering charismatics (chs. 11–13) were linked to the Jesus movement, the text would probably better fit a Syrian or Palestinian context. Thus, the different sections and the sources behind them may stem not just from different times but also from a variety of geographical settings. Therefore, at present one cannot ascertain a more precise date or place of origin for the *Didache*. To sum up, we may quote Aaron Milavec from his more recent commentary: "The end result, therefore, was a complex (or even haphazard) collage that joined bits and pieces of traditional material coming from unidentified communities and/or unknown authors."[36] As a consequence, Milavec himself opts for a mostly synchronic reading of the *Didache*, which allows him "to concentrate on hearing the text as a whole and endeavoring to discern the organizational thread that guided the framers in the ordering of their material."[37] This approach will essentially be adopted for this essay. Although we do not deny that the *Didache* is a composition of very different materials, it is nevertheless possible to read the text as the final redactor, who may also be called the author or, as Milavec prefers, "the framer,"[38] put it together.

33. For a detailed discussion of the "Time and Place of Writing," see Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 52–54.

34. See the very careful judgment of Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 53: "An origin around 110 or 120 CE remains hypothetical, but there are as yet no compelling reasons to dismiss this hypothesis." However, Niederwimmer also reminds us that "a distinction between tradition and redaction" (52), that is, the archaic origin of the individual sources of the document and its final overall redaction, is necessary.

35. Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 53.

36. Milavec, *Didache*, xii.

37. Ibid. This approach is adopted also by Taras Khomych, "The Admonition to Assemble together in *Didache* 16.2 Reappraised," *VC* 61 (2007): 121–41, esp. 124.

38. Milavec, *Didache*, xii et passim.

The Call to Confess One's Sins

The goal of the *Didache*'s ethics is the perfection of the individual Christian and of the church as a whole.[39] What are the dimensions of the *Didache*'s understanding of being "perfect" (τέλειος in 1:4; 6:2)? First, it refers to fulfilling the divine commandments: "If anyone slaps your right cheek, turn the other to him as well, and you will be perfect" (1:4; cf. Matt 5:39b; Luke 6:29a). While the Didachist draws here essentially on Q material, he interprets it in a particular direction. Perfection is achieved by a certain ethical behavior. The renunciation of a violent reaction against an enemy follows the commandment of Jesus and reveals the social dimension of this kind of perfection. In the addition to the epilogue of the "Manual of the Two Ways," the Didachist concludes: "For if you can bear the entire yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect (τέλειος); but if you cannot, do as much as you can" (6:2).

The understanding of this verse rests on the interpretation of what is meant by "the entire yoke of the Lord (ὅλον τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ κυρίου)?"[40] Among various answers, it has been proposed that this refers to total sexual abstinence.[41] This interpretation implies that ascetics would denounce marriage while ordinary Christians may be married and thus only asked to observe a kind of restricted or temporary ascetism.[42] However, as neither marriage nor sexual abstinence is mentioned in the *Didache*, this interpretation seems to be rather unlikely.[43] A far more likely interpretation would relate the "entire yoke of the Lord" to commandments derived from the ethical teachings of Jesus (1:3b–21:1). Thus, one could read it as a synonym for the "new law of Christ" although this term is not mentioned in the *Didache* itself.[44] For the Didachist, there is no doubt that Christians are called to fulfill the divine commandments, or at least to do what they can. As part of the "path of life" (4:14), however, they need to confess their failings (4:14): "Confess your (sing.) transgressions in church, and do not come to your (sing.) prayer with an evil conscience. This is the path of life."

How should one imagine such a confession of failings? It is important to notice that the call to confess one's sins is addressed to the individual believer. One could assume that the reference is to the petition of the Lord's Prayer to "forgive us our debt, as we forgive our debtors" (8:2). However, in the context of

39. *Did.* 1:4; 6:2; 10:5; 16:2; cf. Matt 5:48; 19:21; Rom 12:2.

40. Cf. Sir 51:26; Matt 11:29–30; Acts 15:10.

41. Harnack, *Lehre*, 19–21; Knopf, *Lehre*, 21: "The ideal is to live a life of total celibacy: anyone who can do that is a τέλειος" cited in Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 122 n. 21.

42. So Knopf, *Lehre*, 21.

43. *Did.* 2:2 argues against unnatural sexual practices of different kinds (οὐ πορνεύσεις οὐ μοιχεύσεις οὐ παιδοφθορήσεις). However, there is no indication that the Didachist opposes marriage.

44. Rightly so: Rordorf and Tuilier, *Doctrine*, 32–33; Niederwimmer, *Didache*, 122–23.

the *Didache* this is not very likely because all Christians are to recite the "Our Father" three times a day. This points to a more private setting that is not related to the preparation for the Lord's Supper in the community. The confession of transgressions should, however, take place "in church" (ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ), that is, as part of the worship meeting on a Sunday.[45] However, there is no evidence for a collective prayer or a general formula for confessing one's sins. Willy Rordorf makes another interesting suggestion.[46] He cites a part of the communal prayer in *1 Clem.* 59–61[47] as an example of a contemporary penitential prayer (*1 Clem.* 60:1–2):

> You who are merciful and compassionate,
> forgive us for our lawless acts, unjust deeds, transgressions, and faults.
> Take into account none of the sins committed by your male and female servants,
> but cleanse us with your truth.
> Set our steps straight that we may go forward with devout hearts,
> to do what is good and pleasing to you and to those who rule us.

While this is certainly a very good illustration of what a penitential prayer during the first century C.E. looked like, it does not really answer the question why the author of the *Didache* does not include a more or less similar text, for he provides his readers with a few other liturgical prayers. In addition to *Did.* 8:2b–3, where he cites the Lord's Prayer at full length, he presents in *Did.* 9 and 10 first (!) a thanksgiving prayer over the cup (9:2) and then over the bread (9:3b–4). Finally, he adds a prayer of thanksgiving after the meal (10:2–6). In addition to these prayers, the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the Coptic translation of the *Didache* also hand down a prayer of thanksgiving for the ointment.[48]

Therefore, we simply must acknowledge that there is no evidence for penitential prayer as part of the public liturgy of this community. Having done so, we now need to address the question why such a prayer—in all likelihood—did not exist in this community which puts so much emphasis on confessing one's sins.

This leads us secondly to the social or ecclesiological dimension of repentance and "perfection." Whenever the *Didache* introduces a specific prayer, it uses the plural imperative: "pray (προσεύχεσθε) as follows" in *Did.* 8:2 to introduce the Lord's Prayer; "give thanks (εὐχαριστήσατε)as follows" in *Did.* 9:1 to introduce the first eucharistic prayer, and in *Did.* 10:1 before the prayer following the Lord's

45. *Did.* 14:1; cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Rev 1:10; Ign. *Magn.* 9:1.

46. Willy Rordorf, "La rémission des péchés selon la Didachè," *Irénikon* 46 (1973): 283–97.

47. For a very thorough study of this prayer, see Hermut Löhr, *Studien zum frühchristlichen und frühjüdischen Gebet: Untersuchungen zu 1 Clem 59 bis 61 in seinem literarischen, historischen und theologischen Kontext* (WUNT 160; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

48. Wengst, *Didache*, 57–59.

Supper. However, the call to confess is formulated in the singular (4:14). For the *Didache*, the confession of sins is something required of individual Christians whether they do it in a liturgical and general way by praying the Lord's Prayer thrice a day or in the middle of the local Christian community during a Sunday meeting before the Lord's Supper. The picture that evolves regarding the practice in *Did.* 14:1 is that all are required to confess their transgressions individually during the worship service. Since there is no prescribed liturgical form of confession, it is rather unlikely that we have to think in terms of a joint confession of the whole community.[49] In the light of *Did.* 4:14, the confession in the worshiping community is best understood as individual Christians confessing their transgressions to one another or aloud and publicly to the whole community.[50] Such a procedure is not difficult to imagine in an intimate house church setting of a first-century assembly.

As part of the second eucharistic prayer, the *Didache* knows another type of perfection: "Remember your church, O Lord; save it from all evil, and perfect (τελειόω) it in your love" (10:5). This second petition of the prayer asks for the eschatological perfection of the church, which is to be brought about by the love of God.[51] Thus, finally, the perfection of the church is not a matter of the ethical conduct of individual Christians, but something for which God is responsible. The eschatological dimension of such perfection is again stressed later: "Gather together frequently, seeking what is appropriate for your souls. For the entire time of your faith will be of no use to you if you are not found perfect at the final moment" (16:2). The perfection of faith will happen only if the believers stand firm at the final hour of the eschatological trial.

Repentance, Sacrifice, and the Lord's Supper

In the *Didache,* the need for the confession and forgiveness of sins becomes most pressing at the Lord's Supper. Just after the eucharistic prayer in *Did.* 10, there follows a ritual acclamation (cf. Eph 5:14b): "May grace come and this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent. Maranatha! Amen" (*Did.* 10:6). As the early Christians at this point turn from their communal meal to the celebration of the Lord's Supper,

49. Contra Bernhard Poschmann, *Paenitentia secunda: Die kirchliche Busse im ältesten Christentum bis Cyprian und Origenes: Eine dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Theophaneia 1; Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1940), 90; followed by Rordorf, "Rémission," 286.

50. There is no indication that the individual confession should be addressed to an office holder, that is, a bishop or deacon. This would be rather anachronistic for a first-century setting!

51. Niederwimmer (*Didache*, 160) rightly stresses the eschatological over against the moral sense. Although both are not exclusive in the *Didache*, the eschatolocial interpretation is confirmed by the third petition, which deals with the perfection of the church in unity. Cf. *Did.* 16:2; John 17:23.

they pray for the end of the world and for Christ to come ("Maranatha"; cf. 1 Cor 16:22). Between these two eschatological parts of the prayer there is an invitation to the holy believers who have been baptized (9:5) and perfected in terms of the "Way of Life" (6:2). Only they are thus part of the church, which is prayed for in order to be perfected in God's love (10:5). These are called to come and celebrate the Lord's Supper. The others, who have done "as much as (...) [they] can" (6:2) but have still failed, need to repent before they can partake in the Lord's Supper. Basically the same idea is spelled out in greater detail later in the text (14:1–3):

> 1. On the Lord's day, when you gather together, break bread and give thanks *[or: celebrate the Eucharist]* after you have confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice (θυσία) may be pure.
> 2. Let no one quarreling with his neighbor join you until they are reconciled, that your sacrifice (θυσία) may not be defiled.
> 3. For this is the sacrifice mentioned by the Lord: "In every place and time, bring me a pure sacrifice (θυσία). For I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is considered marvelous among the Gentiles. (Mal 1:11, 14)[52]

These lines raise the question regarding the meaning of "sacrifice."[53] The *Didache*'s understanding of the Lord's Supper does not focus on the death of Jesus. Unlike the apostle Paul (see Rom 3:25; 5:8; 8:31–32; 2 Cor 5:17–21) or the author of Hebrews (Heb 9:26–28; 10:10), the *Didache* shows no interest in the Atonement. The Passover, which to most scholars is crucial for understanding the origins of the Lord's Supper, is not referred to,[54] although the *Didache* is heavily influenced by Jewish traditions.[55] Since there is no reference to sacrifices in the rest of the text, not even in the eucharistic prayers of *Did.* 9–10 where one could expect them, it comes as a surprise that *Did.* 14:1–3 refers to the term "sacrifice" (θυσία) three times altogether. At least three different interpretations seem to be possible. First, one could identify the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice. This would make *Did.* 14:1–3 the earliest instance of this association. Later tradition made this connection between the Lord's Supper and sacrifice because of the link between the passion of Jesus and the Lord's Supper in the Synoptics and the Pauline letters. However, the *Didache* does not refer to the passion of Christ. Thus, it is far form certain that θυσία in *Did.* 14:1–3 refers to the Lord's Supper as it can around 150

52. Ehrman (LCL) translates παραπτώματα as "unlawful deeds."

53. See also Carsten Claussen, "The Eucharist in the Gospel of John and in the *Didache*," in *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers* (ed. Andrew Gregory and Christopher Tuckett; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 135–63, here 155–58.

54. See the classic study of Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus.* (trans. N. Perrin; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966); trans. of *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (3rd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960).

55. Cf. for the whole topic van de Sandt and Flusser, *Didache*; Marcello del Verme, Didache *and Judaism: Jewish Roots of an Ancient Christian-Jewish Work* (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2004).

C.E. when Justin Martyr calls "the bread of the eucharist, and also the cup of the eucharist" sacrifices (*Dial.* 117.1).[56]

Second, it is possible to apply the term "sacrifice" to the prayers of thanksgiving for cup and bread (chs. 9–10). There are a number of references where ancient Jewish and early Christian texts call prayers sacrifices. Already in the Old Testament the psalmist prays: "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice" (Ps 141:2).[57] According to Josephus, "at these sacrifices prayers for the welfare of the community must take precedence over those for ourselves" (*Ag. Ap.* 2.196). For Philo, sacrifices are in general an occasion for prayer (*Spec. Leg.* 1.97).[58] In particular, the Qumran Essenes, who could not take part in the regular daily, Sabbath, and festival sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple, spoke of prayer presented as sacrifice (1QS 9:26; 10:6, 8, 14).[59] However, regarding the Temple cult in Jerusalem, it must be pointed out that although prayers became increasingly more important during the last centuries of the Second Temple they never became equal to sacrifices.[60]

In the New Testament the main sacrifice, of course, is Christ's atoning death on the cross (cf. Heb 9:1–14). But sacrificial concepts still supply metaphors for describing the worshiping activities of the believers, like those mentioned in Heb 13:15: "Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."[61]

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56. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 4.30.1; Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 4.

57. Cf. Hos 6:6: "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."

58. See E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 2005), 80; Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (TSAJ 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 132.

59. Cf. the quoting of Prov 15:8 in CD 11:20–21. However, this does not mean that in Qumran prayer simply replaced sacrifice. As Eileen M. Schuller ("Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* [ed. Richard N. Longenecker; McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2001], 66–88) points out: "Prayer, therefore, was not to replace ultimately the sacrificial system ordained by God for all eternity in the Torah. For the covenanters, only in the present 'time of Belial' did it need to take on that role" (72). Cf. Daniel K. Falk, "Scriptural Inspiration for Penitential Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 127–57, here 131: "Therefore, even in sectarian texts, prayer at fixed times and use of the metaphor of prayer as offering does not necessarily indicate that prayer was thought of exclusively as an alternative for sacrifice."

60. So rightly Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (trans. Richard S. Sarason; SJ 9; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977), 123; however, later on there was a rabbinic conception that prayer can take the place of sacrifice. See George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927), 2:217–219.

61. The formulation θυσία αἰνέσεως ("sacrifice of praise") alludes to Ps 49:14 LXX.

Justin Martyr not only calls the eucharistic elements sacrifices, as we have seen, but he also refers to "prayers and giving of thanks" as the "only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifices."[62] Irenaeus of Lyons speaks of the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice now offered throughout the world (cf. Mal 1:10–12)[63] and also of prayer as sacrifice (*Adv. Haer.* 4.30.1).

Neither of the above interpretations, identifying the term "sacrifice" in *Did.* 14:1–3 either with the elements of the Lord's Supper or with the eucharistic prayers, seems to be impossible, and they are certainly not exclusive of each other. However, in light of the *Didache*'s overall intention to instruct catechumens and baptized Christians alike to follow the "way of life" (1:2–4:14) and to avoid the "way of death" (5:1–2), both of the above interpretations seem to fall short of the general character of the whole document. The Lord's Supper and the prayers involved may certainly be seen as part of the greater Christian sacrifice,[64] but the concept of a sacrifice, which should be provided by the Christian believers, rather includes their whole life.

Such spiritualization of self-sacrifices was already well known in ancient Judaism. In a way that is quite different from the criticism of concrete sacrifices by the OT prophets (see, e.g., Isa 1:11, 15–17) Philo writes:

> And indeed though the worshippers bring nothing else, in bringing themselves they offer the best of sacrifices, the full and truly perfect (τέλειος) oblation of noble living, as they honour with hymns and thanksgivings their Benefactor and Saviour, God, sometimes with the organs of speech, sometimes without tongue or lips, when within the soul alone their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise. (*Spec. Leg.* 1.272)[65]

Such an understanding of spiritual and ethical self-sacrifices can be found also in the New Testament. Especially in Paul's letters there is a full theology of sacrifice.[66] The apostle views his own ministry as bringing the Gentiles as an offering (προσφορά) to God (Rom 15:15–16; cf. Isa 66:20). While Paul leaves no

62. Justin, *Dial.* 117.2; *1 Apol.* 13.1; cf. Robert J. Daly, *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), 90; idem, *Christian Sacrifice: The Judaeo-Christian Background before Origen* (Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity 18; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1978), 331.

63. Mal 1:10–14 or parts of it appear quite frequently in connection with the early Christian understanding of sacrifice. Cf. Karl Suso Frank, "Maleachi 1,10ff. in der frühen Väterdeutung: Ein Beitrag zu Opferterminologie und Opferverständnis in der alten Kirche," *TP* 53 (1978): 70–78.

64. See, for example, Rom 12:1; 15:15–16; 2 Cor 2:14–17; 1 Pet 2:1–10; Heb 10:19–25; 12:18–24; 13:10–16. Cf. for this topic in general Daly, *Origins*; idem, *Sacrifice*; Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

65. Trans. Colson, LCL; cf. 1.248, 270, 275, 277.

66. Daly, *Sacrifice*, 230–50.

doubt that Christ's death atones once for all as a sacrifice for sin (see 1 Cor 6:7; Rom 6:10), he can still encourage his fellow believers to present themselves as a spiritual sacrifice (Rom 12:1). In what comes close to the ethical choice between the two ways in *Did.* 1–6 the consequences of such a Christian self-sacrifice follow immediately (Rom 12:2): "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (τέλειος)" (cf. *Did.* 1:4; 6:2; 10:5). Other sacrifices like those offered by pagans are rejected strongly (cf. 1 Cor 10:20; *Did.* 6:3).

Outside the Pauline letters, 1 Pet 2:1–10 serves as the most comprehensive text in the New Testament on the theology of a spiritual sacrifice in early Christianity. Here the addressees are called upon "to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5; cf. Rom 12:1). In the context of the new covenant, the bringing of sacrifices is no longer restricted to a priestly class. Now all Christians are called to live a priestly life and to offer themselves, who are made acceptable before God through Jesus Christ, as sacrifices. This sacrifice should not be viewed in individualistic terms, for together the faithful are viewed as being "built into a spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:5).[67] Thus, the spiritual sacrifice of Christians is finally the church as the community of those who sacrifice their life. For the letter to the Hebrews this spiritual sacrifice has two dimensions. The first, which may be called the theological dimension, is a continuous "sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (Heb 13:15). The second has to do with the social or practical dimension of life: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (Heb 13:16). Both theological and practical dimensions of such an understanding are at the very heart of the synthesis of Hebrews.[68]

Such an understanding of sacrifice pertaining to Christian existence as a whole seems to be much more appropriate for θυσία in *Did.* 14:1–3. The ethics of the "way of life" constitutes the standard by which the individual Christians are called upon to strive for perfection (6:2). The "Manual of the Two Ways" (chs. 1–6) with its instructions and listing of sins may have served for the examination of conscience (4:14). Whoever did not meet the high ethical standards of the *Didache*, although he or she had tried, needed to repent (*Did.* 10:6). If anybody had "committed a sin against his neighbor" (15:3), he or she was to be shunned until repentance and thus reconciliation took place. Thus, the social dimension of repentance is evident. As was mentioned earlier, the ultimate goal of this "way of life" was not just the perfection (6:2) and holiness (10:6) of the individual believer but the eschatological perfection of the church (10:5; 16:2). To this end the believ-

67. Cf. the use of temple imagery in 1 Cor 3:6–16; 2 Cor 6:16; cf. Eph 2:19–22 and in the Qumran writings 1QS 8:1–10; 9:5–7; 4QFlor 1:6.

68. So rightly Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols.; EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1953), 2:429; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (WBC 47B; Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 548.

ers are called to offer prayers of confession and repentance in church (4:14) so that they can be part of it.

Conclusion: The *Didache* on the Way to Penitential Prayer

What do we gain for our understanding of penitential prayer by trying to understand the group mechanism and the belief system of the *Didache*? At what stage is the *Didache* in terms of "The Development of a Religious Institution?"[69] In many ways this document shows us a religious community at a very early stage of its development. The separation from Judaism has somehow happened on an organizational level (*Did.* 8:1–2). All the rest is in transition. Ethics, liturgy, offices, and eschatology are areas where the Jewish tradition is still present in many ways. It comes as no surprise that the *Didache* was lost for a long time, for other documents like the canon of the New Testament and various kinds of liturgy with endless numbers of penitential prayers emerged over time and made this document superfluous for the life and tradition of the church.

However, the *Didache* still holds historic importance. The *Didache* not only reveals an important phase of early Christian ecclesiology, but it can also help to reconstruct another cradle of penitential prayer.

Although there are no fixed penitential prayers in the *Didache*, the institutionalization of confessing one's sins is already well under way. What can be said regarding the observance of fixed times, rites, or a certain liturgical ceremony? Werline has named four factors that indicate the move toward institutionalization:[70] (1) the development of formulaic expressions; (2) the establishment of specific prayer times, either connected to certain weekdays, festivals, or simply occurring daily;[71] (3) an indication that penitential prayer is used as a means of removing sin, that is, the functional equivalent of sacrifice; and (4) penitential vocabulary, which does not necessarily appear in penitential prayers but testifies to a penitential reform movement. These categories can help us to understand the stage of development of the penitential mechanisms in the *Didache*.

1. The *Didache* shows a definite tendency to provide formulaic expressions for the early Christian worship (see 10:6; etc.) It is, however, often difficult to say whether these were taken over from earlier sources and traditions and then adapted or whether they were actually produced by the author of the *Didache*. Overall one gets the impression that the prayers, for example, in *Did.* 9–10, reveal a strong resemblance to earlier Jewish prayers such as, for example, an early version of the *Birkat ha-mazon*, the grace after meals.[72] Regarding the confession of sins in *Did.* 14:1–3, the institutionalization has not yet reached a stage where a

69. This is the subtitle of Werline, *Prayer*.

70. Werline, *Prayer*, 3–4.

71. I have added the "certain weekdays" like the Sabbath or the Sunday to Werline's second factor.

72. See Claussen, "Eucharist," 144–51.

specific penitential prayer has been formulated. If one had to characterize repentance in the *Didache* using attributes like either "personal/individual" or "formal/communal," then one would definitely have to choose the first option.

2. That the institutionalization of repentance is nevertheless well on its way can be seen by the regular times to which the confessing of one's sins has been assigned. On a daily basis, the petition for forgiveness of sins takes place by praying the Lord's Prayer thrice every day (8:2–3). Once a week, on Sunday, when the members of this community come together for worship, they are also obliged to confess their sins and to seek reconciliation with their neighbors if necessary (14:1–2).

3. There are no formalized penitential prayers included in the *Didache,* and there is no direct indication that prayer removes sin apart from the petition for the forgiveness of one's debts in the Lord's Prayer (8:2). Confessing one's sins is distinguished from prayer and should happen *before* one prays (4:14). However, as one reads through the *Didache* one can easily imagine that the institutionalization of the confessing of sins may soon lead to the invention of penitential prayers for communal use in church. In a similar fashion there are already liturgical prayers for the celebration of the Lord's Supper (chs. 9–10).

4. Finally, the community behind the *Didache* definitely shows some features of a penitential reform movement. These people call those who fast on Mondays and Thursdays hypocrites, and so they fast instead on Wednesdays and Fridays (8:1). They also set themselves apart from others who "pray like hypocrites" (8:2) and use the Lord's Prayer instead. As we have seen, they emphasize the confessing of sins and do not interact with those who resist repentance (15:3). They use the "Manual of the Two Ways" (chs. 1–6) that others have used before, but one gets the impression that these people strive for the highest ethical standards. All these are signs that the addressees of the *Didache* can rightly be viewed as a penitential reform movement.

How do these observations fit into the wider context of early Christianity and ancient Judaism? It is surprising that the *Didache*, like the New Testament,[73] does not include or cite any of the penitential prayer texts mentioned at the very beginning of this essay. As the penitential prayer tradition was so influential in Second Temple Judaism, one would have expected at least some trace in a document that otherwise draws heavily on Jewish thoughts and sources. However, there is no indication in the *Didache* that the confession of sins required a communal prayer within the context of public worship. On the contrary, the author of the *Didache* urges his fellow believers to confess their sins in church individually (4:14). Such confession of sins appears side by side with the call for reconciliation between fellow believers (14:1-2). On a day-to-day basis the petition of the Lord's Prayer may serve the same purpose to be forgiven (8:3) and in the same way as

73. See also the fine essay by Werline, "The Impact of the Penitential Prayer Tradition on New Testament Theology," in this volume.

they forgive those who have sinned against them (8:2). This interrelation between individual forgiving and receiving forgiveness is, of course, very close to Matthew's Gospel. There the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13) is followed immediately by a Marcan saying (Mark 11:25–26), which emphasizes the dependence of receiving God's forgiveness on forgiving one another (Matt 6:14-15; cf. 1 John 1:8-10).

Thus, it becomes clear that the *Didache*'s understanding of an individual confession of sin and its social dimension is quite close to some New Testament texts, while the impact of ancient Jewish traditions of penitential prayer seems to be rather limited. Overall, this makes the *Didache* a fascinating source for reconstructing the development of an early Christian understanding of repentance and prayer around 100 C.E.

The East Syrian Rite of Penance

Bryan D. Spinks

When discussing any liturgical rite of the East Syrian tradition, I am always conscious of a remark made by Richard Giles, the dean of the Episcopal Cathedral in Philadelphia, in his book entitled *Creating Uncommon Worship*.[1] This book is about how to perform services, and, in promoting the practical over the academic, Giles made a reference in passing to "arcane knowledge of the anaphora of Addai and Mari."[2] The Anaphora of Addai and Mari may well be the most ancient eucharistic prayer we have. However, what Giles so carelessly overlooked in this remark is that Addai and Mari is alive and well, and the normal liturgy in use in the Church of the East, the Chaldean Church, and the Syro-Malabar Church of India—some four million people and thus larger than the Episcopal Church. To call the normal Sunday rite of Arab Iraqis, Persian Iranians, and Indian Christians "arcane" is just about as politically, racially, and ecumenically inept as one can get. This tradition came out of Semitic Christianity, and therefore its practices, past and present, are of more than arcane interest. The rite of penance is today regularly included in the Sunday liturgy and comes just before the communion. This paper, therefore, is concerned with the theological genesis of a contemporary practice. The rite itself is called the *Taksa d'Hussaya*, which literally means the "book of purification." This paper will consider its current shape and content; it will consider the wider tradition of penance in the Syrian tradition; and finally it will briefly reflect on its use of Old Testament penitential material.

The Shape and Content of *Taksa d'Hussaya*

The structure of the rite resembles that also found in the rites of marriage, baptism, ordinations, and *Lelya* and *Sapra* (Morning and Evening Prayer), and this standardization of ritual structures was made probably in the ninth century. So these rites have a common introductory section: Prayer with the *Surraya* (psalm), prayer with *Onyata* (responsorial hymn), and prayer with *Qanona* (refrain). These are preceded by the Lord's Prayer. We thus have the following elements that make up the rite of penance:

1. Richard Giles, *Creating Uncommon Worship* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004).
2. Ibid., 37.

Lord's Prayer
Prayer before *Surraya*
Surraya: Pss 25, 122 and 129
Prayer before *Onyata*
Onyata
Prayer before *Qanona*
Qanona: Ps 51, with two refrains
Tesbohta (hymn of praise)
Signing
Trisagion
Gospel reading
Karozutha
Two prayers
Prayer of the imposition of hands with signing

Although in the manuscript tradition there is considerable variation, attesting to a once larger regional plurality and local custom, today there are two principal versions—The Church of the East, and the Trichur, or Indian, recension.[3] The Chaldean Church does not use it; since being in communion with Rome, it dropped its own usage in favor of the Roman practice of Confession.

Certain psalms, Gospel narratives, and parables supply the bedrock for any ritual of penitence. Which of these are taken up in the East Syrian rite? The prayer before *Surraya* speaks of God who washes out the multitude of our souls, who washes us with hyssop, and who does not wish the death of a sinner. Psalm 25 requests God's forgiveness. This theme is taken up in the prayer before the *Onyata*, which asks God to forgive sin, and to receive us into his arms. The prayer then switches to the imagery of God as pastor of the flock of sheep. The *Onyata* speaks of God extending his hand to the lost, and the prayer before *Qanona* images God who brings back the wanderers into the holy church. The Gospel reading is Luke 15:3–32, the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the father's love. Three ritual actions accompany these readings: (1) a signing over the person but without touching them; (2) at the end of the rite, prayer with the laying on of hands; and (3) signing with oil if the penitent has sinned of his own free will, but signing without oil if the sin was not of a person's free will.

The Rite in the Context of the Syrian Tradition on Penitence

How, then, does this rite, if at all, reflect the piety of the theology of the Syrian tradition?

Here I turn to earlier Syrian and East Syrian witnesses.

3. For the Trichur readings, see Robert Matheus, "Taksa D-Hussaya," in *The Folly of the Cross: Festschrift in Honour of Prof. Varghese Pathikulangara* (ed. Paulachan P. Kochappilly; Bangalore: Dharmaram, 2000), 280–300.

The *Didascalia*

This document, originally written in Greek but extant in its entirety only in Syriac, seems to derive from North Syria around 230 C.E. It is a church order, a document giving instructions on the ordering of the church, particularly giving instructions to bishops. In ch. 6 the bishop is to "judge like God," strictly at first, but afterwards with compassion and mercy when repentance is forthcoming. Psalm 74:19 and Jer 8:4-5 are cited as scriptural foundations for this approach.[4] However, with Matt 19 and 1 Cor 7 in mind, the bishop is told to be stern and keep the sinner apart from the church. The person must be examined to see if he/she is truly repentant, and if so, a period of fasting is assigned, depending on the offense. This is to be a period of fasting and prayer, for which Gen 4:7 and the case of Miriam in Num 12:14 are cited as scriptural bases. Afterwards, the person is to be received into the church. In ch. 7 the person is to repent and weep, and then, while all the people are praying for him, the bishop is to lay hands on him. Failure to receive the penitent is itself a sin.

Similar instructions are given in ch. 10, relating to those convicted of evil deeds and falsehood. Those desiring to repent may enter the congregation to hear the word, but they are not to be received into communion until they have received the seal. While the term "seal" usually refers to baptism, here it refers to the laying on of hands, as the *Didascalia* explains: "For him the imposition of the hand shall take the place of baptism: for whether it be by the imposition of hand, or by baptism, they then receive the communion of the Holy Spirit."[5] Two other references are also pertinent. When quarrels occur, adjudications are to take place on Mondays so that everyone has time until Saturday to resolve the dispute. In ch. 15 widows are instructed not to communicate with those who have been expelled from the church. The document thus witnesses to the removal of persons from communion, though they may hear the word, but after repentance. With fasting and prayer they are readmitted by the laying on of hands.

Aphrahat the Persian Sage

Aphrahat is the earliest extensive witness to Syriac-speaking Christianity, and, along with Ephrem, is claimed as a father by all the Syriac-speaking communities. He compiled a number of *tahwita*, a word that means "manifestation," "example," "demonstration," or "argument." The term "*Demonstrations*" usually designates these writings. *Demonstration* VII is "On Penitents." However, unlike the instructions in the *Didascalia*, this *Demonstration* was not written for the discipline of ecclesiastical penance, but more specifically for the *Bnay Qyama*,

4. Sebastian Brock and Michael Vasey, *The Liturgical Portions of the Didasclaia* (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1982), 9-10.

5. Ibid., 13.

the sons and daughters of the covenant.[6] These were people who at the time of their baptism consecrated themselves to Christ and lived a life of celibacy and asceticism. It was a type of monasticism. It has been suggested that they formed an elite or "inner church" within the Syrian church. However, Sidney Griffith has argued that since they are described also as *ihidaye* ("standing" or "stance"), they had a representative role. For the wider church they stood for Christ, and for Christ they represented the wider church, serving as a *type* for the sake of their own people. This high status ascribed to asceticism in the Syrian communities is already seen in the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, where those baptized vow that henceforth they will lead a celibate life.[7]

The *Demonstration* itself is a type of midrash on Deut 20:1–9.[8] The concern of this *Demonstration* is that those ascetics who fall wounded in their spiritual combat should confess to their spiritual fathers and return to their commitment. Though for ascetics, it clearly also sets a pattern for all Christians. Aphrahat notes that only Christ out of all those who have put on the "body" (the Syriac idiom for being born and for the incarnation) has been victorious and has overcome the world. No one else who takes part in the spiritual contest is able to avoid being wounded. Like illnesses, wounds have medicines for cure, and penance is a medicine, for God does not reject penance—and here Aphrahat cites Ezek 33:11. Throughout the *Demonstration* Aphrahat uses the images of wounds, medicine, and healing—Christ being the physician. Rather similar to *Didascalia*'s address to bishops, Aphrahat addresses spiritual counselors thus: "You too hold the keys of the gates of heaven, listen, and open the gates to the penitents, and be obedient to what the blessed apostle said, 'If one of you is burdened with wrong you who are in the spirit should support him with meek spirit and be careful lest you too be tempted'" (Gal. 6:1).[9] The person has been separated from the company. A series of Scriptures are cited to reinforce reconciliation to the community—Prov 28:13; Luke 15:11–32; Rom 5:10; Num 14:19; and Ps 51 are also referenced. Penitents should be like Aaron the high priest and confess their sins. Toward the end of the *Demonstration*, it may be bishops who are being addressed as "shepherds" and who are exhorted to "strengthen the sick, support the ill, bandage the broken limbs, heal the lame, and keep the fatlings for the Lord of the flock (Ezek 34:3–5)."[10] Aphrahat gives no information about a ritual here, though in *Demonstration* 23:3 he refers to oil used in penance.

6. Robert Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church," *NTS* 21 (1974–75): 59–80.

7. Sidney H. Griffith, "Monks, 'Singles,' and the 'Sons of the Covenant': Reflections on Syriac Ascetic Terminology," in Εὐλόγημα*: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft SJ* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1993), 141–60.

8. For the text, see Kuriakose Valavanolickal, *Aphrahat Demonstrations I* (Changassery: HIRS, 1999).

9. Ibid., 143.

10. Ibid., 152–53.

St. Ephrem

Ephrem was a prolific writer, and it is not my intention to examine all his writings on this topic. Here I will confine myself to three works that are attributed to Ephrem: the *Homily on Repentance, The Repentance of Nineveh*, and *An Exhortation to Repentance*.

The *Homily on Repentance* is reminiscent of Aphrahat's *Demonstration*, and a passage suggests that this too was aimed at the *Bnay Qyama*. Ephrem says:

> You have once renounced Satan and his angels, and have entered into covenant with Christ before many witnesses. Consider who it was you engaged with in the covenant, and by no means make light of Him or it. Moreover be assured of this, that the Angels at that time recorded your words, your covenant, and the renunciation you made; and this record they laid up in Heaven against that dreadful Day of Judgement. Does not this thought make you afraid? Do you not tremble at it? In the Day of Judgement, the Angels shall produce your bond and the words of your mouth, before that formidable bar, where even the Angels themselves shall stand with trembling. Then must you hear those cutting words, "out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, wicked servant." Then you will lament indeed, and weep bitterly in that hour, but then it will do you no good.[11]

Of course, those attuned to speaking of the baptismal covenant will see this as no more than reminding Christians of their baptism, but the reference to covenant for Ephrem most probably refers to the *Bnay Qyama*. However, the homily was read by the later Syrian church, like Aphrahat, as applying to Christians in general. For Ephrem, repentance is an eschatological event or, at least, is on the threshold of the eschaton, as he speaks of the bridegroom coming and refers to the parable of the wise and foolish maidens. As with Aphrahat, there is a reference to Ps 51. Ephrem advises,

> Be sure you do not allow your souls to be destroyed by famine, but feed and nourish it with the word of God, with Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, by frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, with fasts, with watches, with prayers, with tears, with the hope of the meditation upon the good things to come. These and such things as these, are the nourishment and life of the soul.[12]

It is perhaps no accident that the *Taksa d'Hussaya* is indeed made of the word of God, psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, and prayer. If the compilers were looking for guidance, Ephrem provided it.

In *The Repentance of Nineveh*, Ephrem stresses the importance of fasting, and of conquering Satan with prayer. But then in what could almost be based on a

11. See http://users.sisqtel.net/williams/repentance.html, p. 3.
12. Ibid., 6

liturgy of reconciliation, he speaks of those Ninevites who wanted to accompany Jonah back to Israel, and Jonah's attempt to dissuade them:

> He freely gave them his blessing;
> He exhorted them in wisdom,
> He gave them sweet counsel,
> That they would yield to the advice given them,
> And be obedient to the word of his mouth.
> He entreated them much, but they did not regard it;
> He prayed, but they paid no reverence
> He counseled them, but no one turned;
> He kissed and dismissed them, but none remained behind.
> He kissed and dismissed them, but none remained behind.[13]

In his recent study *Healing in the Theology of Saint Ephrem*, Aho Shemunkusho has noted that, like Aphrahat (and for that matter like the Gospel narratives, where healing and saving are frequently synonymous), Ephrem uses images from the sphere of medicine in the context of salvation. Jesus Christ is the great Physician, and the disciples are physicians of the soul.[14] Satan and free will together affect morality and spirituality. This is amply illustrated in *An Exhortation to Repentance*. There sin is described as "worse than the lion, for it destroys both soul and body."[15] Ephrem refers to the parable of the wise and foolish maidens, and it is not impossible that he too was aware of oil in relation to penance.

However, he speaks of the physician "who brings remedies for the wounds of sinners," and in a fine passage says:

> I hope that repentance will cleanse
> The great sore which has befallen me,
> And that goodness will cover up
> the hateful and foul stain;
> Because Jesus the physician cries,
> "O man, thy sins are forgiven thee,"
> And abundantly bestows health
> To the soul and body of the sickly;
> And because the crucified king carries
> The key of the gate of Paradise,
> And opens it without stint to robbers and murderers.[16]

13. Henry Burgess, ed., *The Repentance of Nineveh* (London: Blackader, 1853), 106.

14. Aho Shemunkasho, *Healing in the Theology of Saint Ephrem* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2004).

15. Ibid., 159.

16. Burgess, *Repentance of Nineveh*, 149.

Of interest also is what appears to be a meditation or midrash on verses from Ps 51:

> Behold, Lord, I am contrite for my crimes;
> The whole multitude of my responsibilities
> Together would make supplication
> Until they obtain acquittal;
> And would utter sounds of weeping,
> And pour out tears like water;
> And our heart would break with sighing
> Until there is forgiveness.
> Let David stand up and sing for us
> His great psalm of supplication,
> "Have mercy upon me, O Lord";
> And do Thou answer us according to Thy grace.
> Let not Thy kindness fail us
> The great door of Thy goodness;
> But may we see our bills
> Torn down from the lintel.
> Let us have no creditor,
> Other than Thy dominion.
> According to the greatness of Thy mercy turn to us,
> And blot out the handwriting of our sins.
> In the mirror of repentance
> May we see the magnitude of our blemishes;
> "Wash me throughly from my iniquity,
> And purge me from my sins."
> Let our body praise Thee that it is cleansed
> From the filth of its origin;
> And our conscience that it is purified
> From corrupt imagination.
> Let our soul rejoice that it hath been purged
> With Thy hyssop, Lord, from its stairs;
> And then let it return thanks
> With the Psalmist, the Son of Jesse.[17]

As noted in the initial discussion of the *Taksa d'Hussaya*, there are certain biblical texts that are almost certain to crop up in any discussion of penance and any rite of penance, and Ps 51 is an obvious text. I am certainly not suggesting that Ephrem knew a version of the *Taksa d'Hussaya*. On the other hand, given the evidence of the *Didascalia* a century before, there is every reason to suggest that in this homiletic material Ephrem might be alluding to a rite known to him. In turn, Ephrem's fame and authority mean that these homilies provide raw material for any compilation or development of a rite of penance.

17. Ibid., 163.

Narsai

In the *Liturgical Homily XXXII* "On the Priesthood," Narsai speaks not so much of penitence as of absolution given by the clerical order. So he writes:

> A mortal holds the keys of the height, as one in authority and he binds and looses by the word of his mouth, like the Creator. He binds iniquity with the chain of the word of his mouth; and when a man has returned from his iniquity he turns and looses him. The nod of the creator's power sets the seal after his words, and binds the wicked and looses the good when they have been justified. It is a great marvel of the great love of the God of all that He has given authority to the work of His hands to imitate Him. His nod alone has authority over all that He has created; and it is His to bind and loose according to his Will.[18]

If this is about the authority of forgiveness, earlier in the homily we find the same imagery as in Aphrahat and Ephrem:

> To this end he gave the priesthood to the new priests, that men might be made priests to forgive iniquity on earth. . . . In body and soul mortals lie sick with diseases of iniquity; and there is a need of a physician who understands internal and external diseases. For the cure of hidden and manifest disease the priesthood was (established) to heal iniquity by a spiritual art. The priest is a physician for hidden and open (diseases); and it is easy for his art to give health to body and soul. By the drug of the Spirit he purges iniquity from the mind . . .[19]

This homily is a general discussion of priestly ministry, ranging from baptism to the Eucharist. I am not arguing that Narsai necessarily has in mind the *Taksa d'Hussaya*. Nevertheless, it does point to the priest giving absolution to those seeking it.

The Teaching of the Pearl

Finally is the testimony of Mar Abod Yeshua, Church of the East Metropolitan of Nisibis and Armenia, in a book of called the *Marganitha* ("Pearl") ca. 1298, which became a standard theological handbook in the church. In ch. 7, "Of Absolution and Repentance," he follows Ephrem in calling sin a spiritual disease. He cites the Lucan parables of the lost as well as referring to Peter, Paul, the woman who was a sinner, the publican, and the thief on the cross. So Mar Abod Yeshua wrote:

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18. R. H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 68.

19. Ibid., 64.

> Hence it behooves believers when, through the infirmity of their human nature, which all cannot keep upright, they are overcome of sin, to seek the Christian Dispensary, and to open their diseases to the spiritual Physicians, that by absolution and penance they may obtain the cure of their souls, and afterwards go and partake of the Lord's Feast in purity, agreeably with the injunctions of the eminent doctor, who writes thus: "Our Lord has committed the medicine of repentance to learned physicians, the priests of the Church. Whomsoever, therefore, Satan has cast into the disease of sin, let him come and show his wounds to the disciples of the Wise Physician, who will heal with spiritual medicine.[20]

The quotation is found in the service of the First Day of the Commemoration of the Fast of the Ninevites and seems to be from Narsai. Sin is a disease, and it results in wounds.

The Formation of the *Taksa d'Hussaya*

The liturgical rite has been subjected to an in-depth study by Jacques Isaac, and this section is based on his findings.[21] We have already noted a difference in the texts used in India and those used in the Middle East. Isaac based his study on thirty manuscripts as well as some printed editions, and, as one might think, these show some variations in texts—witnessing to different localities, and different epochs. Of the three signings or ritual actions in the text—immediately after the *tesbotha*, "on the head," but actually traced in the air; after the prayer of imposition of the hand; and that for voluntary sin, but with oil for involuntary sin—Isaac believed that only the latter was the original signing. The use of oil in healing is well known across all the churches of antiquity, but its use here for penitence reinforces the deep-seated tradition of equating sin with disease, and absolution with healing wounds. However, the three signings were attested by Timothy II in his work on the sacraments in the thirteenth century, where they are given a trinitarian interpretation. The Gospel reading is attested first in the sixteenth-century manuscript *Diarbakir* 59, and, according to Isaac, this is an addition made when the rite came to be celebrated outside the Eucharist. In other words, *Taksa d'Hassaya* was originally intended as a rite to be used within the Eucharist, and there was no need to have an extra Gospel reading apart from that appointed for the day. The rite dealt originally with more serious sins—apostasy, heresy, communicating with separated ecclesial groups, sins of the flesh, breaking a fast, and sins such as manslaughter. In anthropological terminology of rites of passage, the rite served as the final aggregation or reincorporation of

20. ʿAbdisho bar Berika, *The Book of Marganitha* (trans. His Holiness Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII; Kerala, India: Mar Themotheus Memorial Printing & Publishing House, 1965), 61.

21. Jacques Isaac, *Taksa D-Hussaya: Le rite du Pardon dans l'Eglise syriaque orientale* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1989).

an individual into the ecclesial communion. The process began with accusation, in private, and the imposition of penance, which was the separation from the community and the altar; the period of liminality consisted of the time needed to complete the penance. The rite concluded the process. Isaac suggests that the rite dates to a time prior to the Synod of Mar Yahbalaha (420), and that although the precise position in the eucharistic liturgy varies slightly, its original *Sitz im Leben* was after "One is Holy, the Father . . . ," and before the communion of the clergy. He suggests that the earliest manuscript, *Mardin-Diarbakir* 31:47, also preserves the original structure:

Invitation of the Deacon.
Priests prayer before the *Surraya*
Surraya—a single psalm
Priests prayer before the *Onyata*
Onyata
Priests prayer before the *Qanona*
Qanona—Psalm 51 with two refrains
Tesbotha
Trisagion
Invitation of the deacon before the imposition of the hand
Prayer of imposition of the hand for pardon
The signing

If we return to the texts, a number of images stand out. God's mercy is stressed, though the Trichur text of the prayer before *Surraya* asks that we may "shudder at your words and shiver at your judgement."[22] God is a shepherd gathering the lost members of the flock; he extends the hand to help; the penitent is received into God's arms—no wonder the rite involves the imposition of the hand. The Trichur *Onyata*, echoing Ephrem, refers to the healthy not needing a physician, and that we are sick in our souls. The prayer for the imposition of the hands asks for a restoration of baptismal status, of sonship by adoption and partaking in the absolving mysteries. The formula that seals the repentance is: "N is signed, renewed, sealed and purified, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

In passing we may note that Syriac uses a range of words for the nature of sin, including *sakluta*, sins of ignorance. It has often been debated by Anglo-Catholics, presumably following Roman Catholic teaching, that something done in ignorance is not really a sin. Here the East Syrian rite thinks differently. Things we do in ignorance do have sinful effects, even if not consciously done—hence the difference between voluntary and involuntary sins mentioned in the rubric regarding anointing. Absent is any direct reference to the priest as physician and healing, though this is clearly the wider theological context of the rite.

22. Matheus, "Taksa D-Hussaya," 282.

Concluding Observations

A rite of penitence is certainly not unique or peculiar to the East Syrian tradition. Furthermore, the great Syriac-writing theologians Aphrahat and Ephrem are common fathers for the Syrian Orthodox and its related churches, as well as the Maronite Church. What is interesting in this survey is the use of Old Testament references and allusions, including the use of Ps 51, as part of the piety and substance of the ritual. In fact it seems that the Old Testament texts provide the rationale for repentance and fasting, as well as providing suitable words to express penitence and lament. The New Testament allusions form "the fulfillment," in terms of allusions to Christ as physician and healer. Of course, these are canonical Scriptures, and there is no reason for this not to be the case. It might be added, though, that early Syriac-speaking Christianity, especially in the region of Adiabene, grew up in the shadow of a strong Jewish community. Robert Murray argued that the *Peshitta* was a Jewish production, in fact another targum, and he suggested that the Christianity of Aphrahat and Ephrem is best accounted for as a breakaway movement among the Jewish community in Adiabene.[23] It is also no accident that the tradition, at least with Aphrahat and continued in the writings of John of Dalyatha, reflects the influence and concerns of the Jewish *merkavah* traditions. The East Syrian *Taksa d'Hussaya* thus might be regarded as a Semitic Christian expression of an older Jewish penitential prayer tradition.

23. Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 10, 8.

Prayer and Penance in Early and Middle Byzantine Christianity: Some Trajectories from the Greek- and Syriac-Speaking Realms

Robert R. Phenix Jr. and Cornelia B. Horn

Introductory Comments and Definitions

The present article is a contribution toward understanding the relationships between penitential literature in Second Temple Judaism and the earliest extant stages in the development of Byzantine and Oriental Christian penitential prayers. The study of the literary qualities of this considerable body of literature has not been as vigorous as the study of its counterparts in Jewish literature. For this reason, the connections offered here are of a somewhat preliminary nature. Christians did appropriate aspects of Second Temple Jewish literature in the area of penitential prayer; however, the relationship is more complex than the adaptation of prayers found in biblical and other Jewish literature and rest more with the appropriation of biblical figures as models of virtue. This literary phenomenon is present in the Qumran writings, albeit in a somewhat different context, but the evidence presented in the present study suggests that the transmission of parabiblical material from Judaism into Christianity played an important role in the formation of Christian penitential prayers.

Studying the development of penitential prayer in Byzantine and Oriental Christian traditions is a task that is closely connected to three historical problems. In chronological order of emergence, these are the origin of penance, the development of sacramental confession, and the creation of manuals of confession, known in Greek as *kanonaria* (plural, *kanonariai*), found particularly in the Byzantine Church. Manuals of confession expressed a theological justification for sacramental confession, which in turn influenced the selection and redaction of penitential prayers.

The rhetoric of Byzantine penitential prayers is another area of investigation, one that has received little or no attention. A penitential prayer is essentially an act of persuasion: the sinner seeks to persuade the deity to overlook his or her transgressions and to bestow the benefits of forgiveness. Hence, rhetorical

This article is dedicated to Lana Avakyan, as a token of our gratitude and friendship.

analysis is of great help in understanding the genre of penitential prayers. The incorporation of rhetoric and genre analysis into the study of these prayers offers a better basis for reconstructing the history of penitential prayers than proceeding from an analysis of the development of the words of a text, as primary as this knowledge is.

Through the incorporation of rhetoric and genre into the scope of the investigation, it is possible to pursue a comparative approach. To this end, the earlier Syriac penitential hymns provide a rich resource. Insofar as these are older than the Byzantine texts examined in the present article, they also allow one a glimpse of the potential sources of Byzantine penitential texts—not the literal wording of the prayers, but the elements of the genre and the techniques of persuasion. Although the texts and styles of Syriac hymns are quite different from the Byzantine material, they do demonstrate an affinity in the strategy of persuasion and in the choice of biblical characters and episodes as part of that strategy.

Biblical characters and episodes that are paradigms of repentance and divine forgiveness are fundamental to the genre of penitential prayers. These biblical precedents are carefully placed into the rhetorical framework. The same characters can be seen in prayers from Syria and Byzantium across several centuries of composition. The study of the manner in which these episodes and characters are incorporated into a hymn reveals a great deal about the biblical interpretation of these passages. In some hymns, biblical interpretation is created through the rhetorical device of characterization, exemplified in the *Hymn of Kassianē*. On the other hand, the increasing use of material from the biblical Psalms to create the text of penitential prayers may reflect the monastic redaction of Byzantine penitential material after the eleventh century. Rhetoric and genre provide a basis for speculating intelligently and in some cases actually demonstrating the precursors and possible sources of later material, even where the textual witnesses, as in the case of the Byzantine Euchologion, leave a large lacuna. Although this article offers a first assessment of the connections between late antique and early medieval Christian penitential literature in the East, such an approach affords one a basis for describing the development of Christian penitential prayers and their relationship to Second Temple Jewish material, on the one hand, and, in the case of Syriac hymns, to a potential forerunner of the genre and rhetoric to be discovered in the Mesopotamian penitential literature, on the other.

Selecting for the present study the tenth century as the upper chronological boundary for material to be considered serves a methodological purpose insofar as it eliminates to a large extent the need to investigate the manuals of confession. These remain an important source for the development of penitential prayers viewed through the concomitant development of the sacrament of confession in Byzantium, which took on most of the elements of its later shape in the course of the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. A fuller study of penance and prayer in Byzantine Christianity will not be able to afford passing over insights to be gained from such manuals.

A penitential prayer is a prayer of a penitent or a group of penitents asking

for forgiveness, or a prayer on behalf of a penitent or penitents that someone else offers. Such a definition of penitential prayer, which facilitates the study of Byzantine Christian material on the topic, is not supercilious; there are elements of other prayers that develop in Christian liturgical use that have elements that are clearly penitential, such as one or more sections of text that, removed from their context, are utterances designed to evoke divine mercy in the addressee on behalf of the speaker or those whom the speaker might mention. One obvious example of embedded penitential material in a prayer that is not as a whole penitential in character is the Our Father of Matt 6:9–13. Matthew 6:12 reads καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν, that is, "and remit to us our debts just as we remit our debtors." Such material is important because it forms a collection of sources from which the composers of penitential prayers drew, in part to use promises of forgiveness as evidence with divine authority in the creation of the appeals of postbiblical transgressors.

The classification of a given prayer as penitential is dependent on the *Sitz im Leben* of that prayer. To return to the example of the Our Father, one may observe that the importance of this prayer, given its reception in Christian tradition as a prayer uttered by Christ, has led to its appearance in nearly every imaginable liturgical context, including rites of penance. In such contexts, this prayer has a penitential character. When used in other contexts, the penitential character of the Our Father fades away and is no longer perceived by the person or community praying. In other prayers, embedded penitential material serves a rhetorical function, primarily in the prologue of the prayer, in order to capture the *benevolentia* of the addressed deity, that is, God in Christian settings. This device is found frequently in prayers that have become part of the eucharistic service in nearly all premodern Christian eucharistic liturgies. The following prayer is taken from the Byzantine Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom:

> Again and many times we fall down before you and beseech you, who are good and the lover of mankind, that heeding our prayer you will cleanse our souls and bodies from every defilement of flesh and spirit, and will grant us to stand without guilt or condemnation before your holy altar. Give also to those who pray with us the grace of progress in right living, in faith and spiritual understanding. Grant that always worshipping you with fear and love, they may partake of your holy Mysteries without guilt or condemnation, and be counted worthy of your heavenly kingdom.[1]

This prayer, which the celebrant recites during the litany before the Great Entrance, is not exclusively penitential in character, yet it contains a petition for

1. See Orthodox Eastern Church, *Ἡ Θεῖα Λειτουργία τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου* [*The Divine Liturgy of Our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom: The Greek Text Together with a Translation into English*] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 21–22.

the removal of defilement caused by sin. Recited right before the procession of the bread and wine into the sanctuary, the entire prayer is part of the preparation for the reception of the Eucharist and is the last prayer before the start of the eucharistic portion of the Byzantine liturgy, which begins with the Great Entrance.[2] Having reminded God of his benevolence in accepting the willingness of the congregation to seek forgiveness of their sins on previous occasions, the celebrant asks for remission of the sins of the congregation on this occasion, as well as for a proper disposition for the reception of communion. This use of precedent as a strategy of persuasion is stock-in-trade in penitential prayers. One finds similar language in Jewish prayer from the Persian period, such as Daniel 9, in which the prayer is expressed in the first person and there are no concrete statements of assurance that forgiveness will be granted.[3] In the present example, the shape of the penitential aspect of this prayer depends on the liturgical context in which the prayer is recited, another fact that has implications for the development of penitential prayers universally. Consideration of liturgical contexts and other types of contexts in which a prayer is situated is important in assessing its development. Here again, Daniel 9 offers an example of a prayer that takes into account a specific occasion, namely, the destruction of Jerusalem, and with this occasion creates the sacred space in which the act of the penitential prayer unfolds.[4]

Prayers that are strictly penitential share with liturgical prayers such as the one cited above both the idea of a precedent for forgiveness and a dependence on the liturgical rite in which they developed. Tracing this development requires an attention to the parallel development of the rite of formal confession. However, there are some peculiarities of the development of the rite of penance in the Byzantine church that affect the search for the sources of the earliest penitential prayers and their subsequent development in ways that are not in evidence for the origin and development of other sacramental prayers, such as ordination or marriage.

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2. For a helpful introduction to the Byzantine liturgy, see, for example, Hans-Joachim Schulz, *Die Byzantinische Liturgie: Glaubenszeugnis und Symbolgestalt*, Sophia 5 (2nd rev. and enlarged ed.; Trier: Paulinus-Verlag, 1980). An English translation by Matthew J. O'Connell, with introductory comments and a review by Robert Taft was published in New York in 1986 by the Pueblo Publishing Company.

3. For a discussion of this prayer and its relationship to other penitential prayers of the Bible, partcularly Neh 9, see Pieter M. Venter, "Daniel 9: A Penitential Prayer in Apocalyptic Garb," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 33–49, here 38.

4. For a discussion of the manner in which penitential prayers reflect and create sacred space, see especially the contribution of Rodney A. Werline, "Prayer, Politics, and Social Vision in Daniel 9," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 17–32, here 26–29.

In an attempt to present and critically assess the main evidence for penitential prayer in Byzantine Christianity up to the tenth century,[5] the following discussion considers in turn the examples of the Byzantine Euchologion, which contains the oldest penitential prayers in use in the Greek-speaking churches. The earliest of these witnesses does not antedate the eighth century. To provide some indication of the earlier stages of the development of penitential prayers, a comparative discussion of the Syriac *Supplications* attributed to Bishop Rabbula of Edessa is undertaken.

The *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* and the *Hymn of Kassianē* offer examples of the different ways in which penitential prayer and biblical interpretation are related in Byzantium. Moreover, they are two well-known prayers that cannot be passed over. The *Canon of St. Andrew* raises questions concerning an important element in the investigation of penitential prayers, namely, the relationship between human anthropology, biblical interpretation of sinful characters, and the pathology of sin, a subject that again is well beyond the scope of the present article.

Penitential Prayers in the Byzantine Euchologion

The main source for the earliest penitential prayers of the Byzantine Church is the Euchologion, or Book of Prayer. This work contains the texts of the prayers of the clergy for every liturgical service, as well as prayers offered by the clergy in nonliturgical settings, including prayers said over a penitent. Miguel Arranz has offered a discussion of the problems involved in the reconstruction of the history of penitential prayers in the Euchologion.[6] The oldest Byzantine Euchologion contained penitential prayers but did not have an ἀκολουθία, that is, a "penitential rite" or "rite" of confession. The rite of penance or confession developed after the earliest incorporation of penitential prayers. With the development of the sacrament of confession in the course of the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries, existing penitential prayers were redacted, and new prayers were composed for the liturgical *Sitz im Leben*, not unlike the manner in which penitential material was incorporated into certain prayers in the eucharistic liturgy. Thus, Arranz created a method for identifying the development of penitential prayers within the liturgical framework of the sacrament of confession. Given the relatively late development of the sacrament of confession, he assumed that penitential prayers that are present in Euchologia outside of any liturgical context are potentially the oldest witnesses. Furthermore, since there is a marked development in the form, content, and number of penitential prayers used in the sacrament of confession

5. For early developments, see also Paul Bradshaw, "The Emergence of Penitential Prayer in Early Christianity" in the present volume.

6. Miguel Arranz, "Les prières pénitentielles de la tradition byzantine: Les sacrements de la restauration de l'ancien Euchologie Constantinopolitain," *OCP* 57 (1991): 87–143, here 87–89.

in the Euchologia, Arranz concluded that sources of penitential prayers other than the Euchologia also have to be classified as important witnesses,[7] independent of whether they can still be identified.

The oldest Euchologia contain only two prayers of repentance, one entitled ἐπὶ τῶν μετανοούντων, "For those who are repenting," and the other prayer known as ἐπὶ τῶν ἐξομολογουμένων, "For those who are confessing." These two prayers are not part of any liturgical rite or office. They occur in all of the oldest Euchologia; that is, they were known and used already before the twelfth century. All of these Euchologia originated from locations east of Constantinople[8] and are accessible for study in the second volume of Aleksei Dmitrievsky's collection of extant Euchologia.[9] Their eastern origin is significant, insofar as Arranz was able to identify many of the elements of the earliest penitential prayers as being similar to Syrian and Egyptian penitential prayers.

The first of these prayers, "For those who are repenting," exists in two forms that can be dated to before the twelfth century: the earlier recension comes from the eighth century, and the latter from the eleventh. The eleventh-century form of the prayer demonstrates a trend of increased usage of the book of Psalms, as well as other features, that are common to the development of liturgical prayer more generally. Since comparison of the two forms is instructive, the texts of both prayers are included in this discussion.

First, the text of the prayer from the eighth century, which reads as follows:

ἐυχὴ ἐπὶ μετανοούντων·
1 Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν,
2 ὁ διὰ τοῦ προφήτου σου Νάθαν,
3 μετανοήσαντι τῷ Δαυὶδ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις πλημμελήμασιν
4 ἄφεσιν δωρησάμενος,
5 καὶ τοῦ Μανασσῆ τὴν ἐπὶ μετανοίᾳ προσευχὴν δεξάμενος,
6 αὐτὸς καὶ τὸν δοῦλον σου τόνδε
7 μετανοοῦντα ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις παραπτώμασι
8 πρόσδεξαι τῇ συνήθει σου φιλανθρωπίᾳ,
9 παρορῶν τὰ αὐτῷ πλημμεληθέντα,
—
12 σὺ γὰρ εἶ Κύριε
—
15 ὁ καὶ ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ ἀφιέναι κελεύσας τοῖς περιπίπτουσιν ἁμαρτίαις,
16 ὅτι ὡς ἡ μεγαλωσύνη σου
17 οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἔλεος σου,
18 καὶ σὺ ὁ Θεὸς τῶν μετανοούντων μετανοῶν ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἀδικίαις ἡμῶν.
19 Ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν

7. Ibid., 89.
8. Ibid., 90.
9. Aleksei Dmitrievsky, *Opisanie liturgicheskikh rukopisei, khranyaschikhsya v bibliotekakh Pravoslavnogo Vostoka*, vol. 2, Εὐχολόγια (Kiev, 1901).

20 καὶ πρέπει σοὶ ἡ δόξα.
21 τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ.
22 νῦν καὶ ἀεί. . .[10]

Prayer for Those Who Are Repenting
1 O God our savior,
2 Who through your prophet Nathan
4 granted remission
3 to David who repented for his own faults,
5 and accepted Manasseh's prayer of repentance,
6 also the very same, your servant N.,
7 who repents of his own transgressions,
8 accept him according to your habitual love of humanity,
9 ignoring his offenses
—
12 For you are Lord
—
15 the one who calls out to forgive seventy times seven those who have fallen into sins,
16 for such is your magnanimity
17 as well as your mercy,
18 and you are the God of those who repent, while repenting of all our iniquities.
19 For you are our God
20 and to you are due glory
21 to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy [Spirit]
22 Now and ever . . .[11]

The longer recension from the eleventh century reads as follows:

ἐυχὴ ἐπὶ μετανοούντων·
1 Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν,
2 ὁ διὰ τοῦ προφήτου σου Νάθαν,
3 μετανοήσαντι τῷ Δαυὶδ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις πλημμελήμασιν
4 ἄφεσιν δωρησάμενος,
5 καὶ τοῦ Μανασσῆ τὴν ἐπὶ μετανοίᾳ προσευχὴν προσδεξάμενος.
6 αὐτὸς καὶ τὸν δοῦλον σου τόνδε
7 μετανοοῦντα ἐφ' οἷς ἔπραξε πλημμελήμασι
8 πρόσδεξαι τῇ συνήθει σου φιλανθρωπίᾳ,
9 παρορῶν πάντα τὰ αὐτῷ πεπραγμένα,
10 ὁ ἀφιεὶς ἀδικίας
11 καὶ ὑπερβαίνων ἀνομίας,

10. The Greek text offered here is adapted from Arranz, "Les prières pénitentielles," 97. We have not included Arranz's apparatus.
11. The English translation is by the present authors.

12 σὺ γὰρ εἶπας Κύριε
13 μὴ θελήσει θέλειν τὸν τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ θάνατον
14 ὡς τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν καὶ ζωήν,
15 καὶ ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ ἀφιέναι τὰ παραπτώματα,
16 ἐπεὶ ὡς ἡ μεγαλωσύνη σου ἀνείκαστος
17 καὶ τὸ ἔλεος σου ἀμέτρητον,
18 εἰ γὰρ ἀνομίας παρατηρήσῃς, τίς ὑποστήσεται;
19 Ὅτι σὺ εἶ Θεὸς τῶν μετανοούντων
20 καὶ σοὶ πρέπει δόξα τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις·
21 τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ[12]

Prayer for Those Who Are Repenting
1 O God our savior,
2 Who through your prophet Nathan
4 granted remission
3 to David who repented for his own faults,
5 and accepted Manasseh's prayer of repentance,
6 also the very same, your servant N.,
7 who is repenting for those faults which he has committed,
8 accept him according to your habitual love of humanity,
9 ignoring all that he has done,
10 [You], the one who remits iniquities
11 and passes over [acts of] lawlessness.
12 For you, O Lord, said
13 that you do not desire the death of the sinner
14 As much as conversion and life,
15 and to remit the transgressions seventy times seven,
16 since your magnanimity is unequaled,
17 and your mercy immeasurable,
18 for "if you notice acts of lawlessness, who could withstand it?"[13]
19 For you are the God of those who repent
20 and to you are fitting glory, honor, and worship
21 To the Father and to the Son and to the Holy [Spirit].[14]

This prayer makes reference to the repentance of David (1 Chr 21:1–22:1) and Manasseh (2 Chr 33:12–13, 19). It is not clear from this prayer whether it alludes to the pseudepigraphical Prayer of Manasseh.[15] Neither of the two forms

12. Arranz, "Les prières pénitentielles," 95.
13. Ps 129:3.
14. The translation is by the present authors.
15. For a translation of the Prayer of Manasseh based on the Syriac text, see J. H. Charlesworth, "Prayer of Manasseh (Second Century B.C.–First Century A.D.): A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983, 1985), 2:625–37. For a recent discussion of the Prayer of Manasseh, see Judith H. Newman, "The Form and Settings of the Prayer of Manasseh," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Juda-*

of this prayer is a prayer of absolution, as Arranz has observed.[16] In both of its two forms, therefore, the prayer is older than the earliest rites of confession attested in tenth-century Euchologia.

A comment on the possible historical context of parts of the prayer may be in order here. It is noteworthy that both of the biblical figures to whom these two forms of this penitential prayer allude, namely, David and Manasseh, are kings. These two forms of the prayer are extant in Patriarchal Euchologia, that is, in prayer books that were used by the Patriarch of Constantinople. One of the responsibilities of the Patriarch of Constantinople was the care for the spiritual well-being of the members of the royal house.[17] It cannot be proven beyond any doubt whether these two forms of the prayer were composed with the royal household of Byzantium in mind, or whether they were incorporated into the Patriarchal Euchologion because of their allusions to biblical kings. Either one of these suggestions is at least possible. Considering the rhetoric of this prayer, it is tempting to see at least a *Sitz im Leben* for its development if not even for its origin in the palace. The prayer presents a precedent for two repentant kings whose prayers God accepted, and then a petition to apply the same precedent to the individual for whom the prayer is offered. One may also note that the mention of the intercession of Nathan suggests that someone offered this prayer for the penitent, rather than that the penitent himself said the prayer, a point that we shall discuss in more detail below.

One remarkable development has taken place in the eleventh-century redaction of this prayer. The younger recension has incorporated a quotation of Ps 129:3. This verse might have been particularly well known to the redactor, as it is recited in the Κύριε ἐκέκραξα psalms (Pss 129, 139, and 140) at Vespers.[18] Its

ism (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 105–25.

16. Arranz, "Les prières pénitentielles," 91.

17. This ministry of the Patriarch of Constantinople on behalf of the spiritual needs of the emperor and his family is documented already in sources from early Christianity. At the unexpected death of the young princess Pulcheria, the daughter of Emperor Theodosius the Great and Empress Aelia Flacilla, for example, Gregory of Nyssa delivered the funeral sermon for the young girl, a speech that was sensitive to the parents' needs in their time of mourning and yet full of pastoral advice in order to build them up and allow them to see God's hand at work even in this tragic event. For the text of this sermon, see Ulrike Gantz, *Gregor von Nyssa: Oratio Consolatoria in Pulcheriam* (Chrēsis 6; Basel: Schwaben, 1999).

18. This psalm is presented in the Euchologion of Ms. Sinai 973 (1153 C.E.); see Dmitrievskiy, *Opisanie*, 2:88; and Nicholas Uspenskiy, *Evening Worship in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 46, although this psalm was perhaps used as early as the seventh century. See Uspenskiy, *Evening Worship*, 58–61, 81. The source for the eleventh-century date is a purported conversation between Nilus of Sinai, John Moschus, and Sophronius of Jerusalem. This conversation is preserved only in the *Taktikon* of the eleventh-century writer Nikon of Raithu (a.k.a Nikon of the Black Mountain or Nikon Černogorets), which survives in a modern Greek text from Sinai. See V. N. Beneshevich, *Taktikon Nikona Cher-*

presence illustrates a broader tendency at the time to incorporate material from the biblical Psalms into written prayers and provides an example of the analogical influence of liturgy on the development of this genre. The use of this psalm quotation from a form-critical standpoint, however, reflects the use of "Complaint Psalms" in Second Temple penitential prayers. In his study of Baruch, Michael Floyd identified a part of the rhetorical arrangement of these prayers which seeks to mollify the deity using various strategies, among them, suggesting that the dead (whom the deity has punished for their sins) cannot give praise, and that therefore the deity should restrain its anger.[19] To this general rhetorical strategy belongs the citation of Ps 123 in this prayer. From this perspective, one cannot rule out that the inclusion of Ps 129 in the longer recension, or other such selections from the Psalms or other texts that played an important role in the development of Byzantine liturgy, is in fact an ancient practice that originated in the common tradition of Jewish penitential prayers transmitted into Christianity.

Another point is that the verb ἀφιέναι, here translated "to remit," has a specific connotation relative to other verbs of forgiveness found in later prayers, which show a possible connection with the liturgy of the post–Second Temple synagogue. This point is addressed below, after more data from other Euchologia have been presented.

A second prayer that dates to the eighth century is "For those who are confessing," a prayer addressed explicitly to Christ:

εὐχὴ ἐπὶ ἐξομολογουμένων·
1 Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν,
2 ὁ τῷ Πέτρῳ καὶ τῇ πόρνῃ διὰ δακρύων
3 ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν δωρησάμενος,
4 καὶ τὸν τελώνην τὰ οἰκεῖα ἐπιγνόντα πταίσματα δικαιώσας·
5 πρόσδεξαι καὶ τὴν ἐξομολόγησιν τοῦ δούλου σου τοῦδε,
6 καὶ εἴτι πεπλημμέληται αὐτῷ ἑκούσιον ἢ ἀκούσιον ἁμάρτημα
7 ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἔργῳ ἢ κατὰ διάνοιαν,
8 ὡς ἀγαθὸς συγχώρησον,
9 σὺ γὰρ μόνος ἐξουσίαν ἔχεις ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας.
10 Ὅτι Θεὸς ἐλέους, οἰκτιρμῶν καὶ φιλανθρωπίας ὑπάρχεις
11 καὶ τὴν δόξαν ἀναπέμπομεν,
12 τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι
13 νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.[20]

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nogortsa: Grecheskii tekst po rukopisi no. 441 Sinaiskago monastyria sv. Ekateriny (Petrograd: n.p., 1917). It is possible that this conversation is spurious.

19. See Michael A. Floyd, "Penitential Prayer in the Second Temple Period from the Perspective of Baruch," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 51–81, here 71–72.

20. Arranz, "Les prières pénitentielles," 99, 101. We have not included the apparatus for the text.

Prayer for Those Who Are Confessing
1 Lord our God,
3 who granted remission of sins
2 to Peter and the prostitute through [their] tears
4 and who justified the tax collector who recognized the transgressions of his way of life,
5 also accept the confession of your servant N.,
8 as you are the Good One, forgive
6 the sins he has committed, voluntary or involuntary,
7 in word, deed, or thought,
9 because you alone have the authority to remit sins.
10 For you remain a merciful God, one of tenderness and of love for humanity,
11 and we send up glory
12 to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
13 now and ever and forever and ever.[21]

This prayer is present in almost every known manuscript of the Euchologion, with the exception of Euchologia reprinted in Venice. The omission of the prayer in the latter quite likely is due to dogmatic, disciplinary, or also polemical concerns. A prayer that offered the suggestion of an immediate connection between Peter as a sinner and the prostitute might have been seen as inappropriate or offensive at the time. Placing the head of the apostles and an adulterous woman in the same category could have been perceived as too bold a challenge to sensitivities in the Latin Church.[22] Arranz argued that this prayer originally served a role in conducting public penance, while later perhaps it may have functioned as a prayer of private penance based on a general rejection of sin, given the generic list of offenses in lines 6 and 7.[23] The rhetorical structure of this prayer is quite similar to that of the prayer "For those who are repenting": an invocation of the divine name, a list of biblical precedents, a petition to consider the present case as fitting the pattern of the precedent, and a concluding doxology. This prayer does not occur in any later liturgical contexts. The statement in line 9 may perhaps best explain this circumstance. There the text formulates that only Christ, whose identity as the addressee is easily inferred from the New Testament Gospel allusions, has the power to remit sins. Arranz has noted a number of textual variations in this prayer, mostly in the lists of attributes in lines 6, 7, and 10. He made one substantial claim, namely, that the verbal form συγχόρησον, "forgive," is a later redaction; a number of Euchologia offer πάριδε, "ignore," in its place. One may agree with him in his interpretation of this insertion as one that reflects a total and definitive forgiveness of sin that manifested itself clearly in later rites of

21. The translation is by the present authors.
22. Arranz, "Les prières pénitentielles," 100.
23. Ibid.

confession.[24] Συγχώρησον does not occur in the New Testament, but is present in other prayers of general confession.[25]

An Euchologion of the tenth century provides evidence for the existence of one early general prayer of confession.[26] Like the prayer "For those who are confessing," this general prayer of confession, which is known in the manuscripts by variations of the title εὐχὴ ἱλαστική, "An Expiatory Prayer," relies on an enumeration of general attributes of sin, without listing specific offenses. These lists account for much of the length of the prayer. In the interest of space, we have not reprinted the text here, limiting the discussion to some pertinent observations.

This prayer was already included in the tenth-century rite of confession, but is considerably older and probably of Near Eastern origin.[27] The sources of this prayer form a subtype of the Greek Euchologion, which originated in western Byzantium. In these Euchologia, which are conventionally called Italo-Greek or Italic Euchologia, the oldest of which dates to the tenth century,[28] one may find a taxis, or rite, of confession that was used when confessing before a priest. The number and disposition of Italic penitential prayers within the rites of penance vary across these Euchologia.

Arranz conjectured that these prayers were not composed specifically for inclusion at the place in the Euchologion where they occur at present, but instead already existed before the ritual that appropriated them.[29] The prayers likely arrived in Italy together with clerics and monks from Constantinople and the Near East. None of these prayers is a prayer of absolution, and they all reflect a theology characteristic of other prayers composed in Constantinople.[30]

This general prayer is reprinted in different contexts in the Euchologia, such as after confession or before confession, and it is preserved in the Goar Euchologion, which is based on a fairly late Euchologion-type. This prayer was transmitted in printed Euchologia in Athens and Rome, and in the Russian Trebnik (the Slavonic translation of the Euchologion) in a modified form. Specifically, Arranz holds that the prayer is Alexandrian, based on the evidence of Coptic prayers of absolution of the priest before communion,[31] although he did not provide a critical dating of the Coptic material. Its ritual use is as a prayer of preparation before confession in the Russian Trebnik, although this prayer presupposes a general remission of sins without confession.[32]

24. Ibid.

25. For example, ibid., 119, under the classicizing form συγχωρῶν in a prayer from the eleventh century in a non-Constantinopolitan Euchologion.

26. Ibid., 102–9.

27. Ibid., 104.

28. To this subtype also belongs the Slavonic Euchologion of Mt. Sinai; see ibid., 90.

29. Ibid., 90.

30. Ibid., 91.

31. Ibid., 108.

32. Ibid., 104.

The vocabulary employed in the prayer allows one to conjecture that it originated in a Syriac-speaking context. Arranz identified the three verbs in line 10, namely, ἄνες, ἄφες, συγχώρησον, "release, remit, pardon," as deriving from a background consisting of the Anaphora of James and Syriac *anaphorai*, as well as of prayers found in the Typika service, which was originally designed for the private reception of the Eucharist by hermits.[33] Arranz also noted a tentative parallel with the Jewish liturgy of Yom Kippur, particularly in the second part of the *viddui* prayer, known by its incipit, *Atta yodea*ʿ. He posited a rough correspondence between the Greek and Hebrew verbs ἄνες (סלח *sᵉlaḥ* "pardon, forgive") ἄφες (מחל *mᵉḥal* "remit"), and συγχώρησον (כפר *kapper* "blot out").[34] Arranz did not note that the verb *kapper* is the same Biblical Hebrew verb that describes the remission of sins effected through the scapegoat ritual of Lev 16. The Greek verb συγχώρησον seems to express the meaning of *kapper* in the context of the penitential rite in Lev 16. However, in the LXX *kippēr* is translated with ἐξιλάσκομαι, "to expiate." The title of this prayer, εὐχὴ ἱλαστική, reflects the same root idea of expiation. All of the philological evidence warrants a closer examination of Arranz's claim concerning the parallels with aspects of the Jewish liturgy. It also raises the possibility that the type of prayer, a "prayer of expiation," might have entered Christianity before the latter's breaking entirely with the synagogue.

Arranz's claims that this prayer is of Near Eastern origin can be supported more fully when one takes note of the extensive use of biblical allusions. This prayer contains allusions to the sinful woman (Luke 7:36–50),[35] the healing of the paralytics (Matt 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12; and Luke 5:17–26), as well as a citation toward the end of the prayer, "whatever you remit on earth will be remitted in heaven" (see Matt 16:19). These scriptural allusions may be later developments of this prayer, but such allusions are found also in Syriac penitential hymns of an earlier period. Indeed, one of the distinctions of the Syriac penitential texts is a frequent allusion to biblical characters and events of forgiveness, nearly all of which are found in the Gospels. The reasonably close connection of penitential prayers preserved in the Greek tradition of the Euchologia with Syriac traditions prompts one to consider more closely the presence of penitential prayers in that language tradition. The following section therefore examines the theme of penance in a little-studied set of hymns traditionally attributed to Rabbula of Edessa.

33. Ibid., 104, 106. See also Juan Mateos, "Un horologion inédit de Saint-Sabas," in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant*, vol. 3, *Orient chrétien* (Studi e Testi 233; Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1964), 47–76. The Typika service is an integral part of the Byzantine daily office, being attached to the end of the Ninth Hour, thus forming the last full office of the liturgical day.

34. Marcus Jastrow, *Sefer Milim: Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica, 1982), ad loc.

35. In this prayer, she is called "prostitute," whereas the Greek of the New Testament has only "sinful woman."

The *Supplications* Attributed to Rabbula of Edessa (d. 436)

The reliance of Syriac penitential poetry on biblical figures as precedents or types of forgiveness may be illustrated in select prayers from the *Takš^{e}pātā*, or "Supplications," attributed to Rabbula, bishop of Edessa (412–436).[36] These prayers are almost certainly spurious as far as the potential authorship of Rabbula is concerned. Yet they were probably not composed after the sixth century, even if the earliest manuscript witness is from the thirteenth century. All of the hymns are penitential in character, albeit that some function primarily as vehicles for conveying doctrines concerning the Virgin Mary, or concerning the role of the martyrs as intercessors. Many of the hymns, which mention the intercession of Mary and the saints on behalf of sinners, also employ extensive biblical typology, particularly in order to illustrate the miraculous childbearing of Mary. Hence, the frequent typology of these penitential hymns reflects a general approach to biblical interpretation and hymnody in the collection as a whole.

Among these *Supplications* one encounters several hymns that bear the title *d^{e}taybūtā*, "On Repentance." These are about forty in number. They are arranged according to tone and according to their place in the Midnight Office on Sundays in Lent, where these hymns are prescribed in the West Syriac breviary, usually after a hymn to Mary, a hymn to the martyrs, and before a hymn either on the final judgment or on the resurrection.[37]

All of the examples of biblical repentance in the *Supplications* come from the New Testament Gospels. The three pericopes from Luke's Gospel: the tax collector, the sinful woman, and the prodigal son, occur with greatest frequency. Often

36. For convenient access to these *Supplications*, see Robert R. Phenix and Cornelia B. Horn, *The Rabbula Corpus* [tentative title], SBLWGRW; Atlanta/Leiden: SBL, forthcoming). Selections of the *Supplications* appeared previously in Julian Joseph Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei, aliorumque opera selecta e codicibus syriacis manuscriptis in Museo Britannico et Bibliotheca Bodleiana asservatis* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1865), 362–78. A more recent study that considers these hymns is an article by Peter Bruns, "Bischof Rabbulas von Edessa–Dichter und Theologe," in *Symposium Syriacum VII: Uppsala University, Department of Asian and African Languages, 11–14 August, 1996* (ed. René Lavenant; Orientalia Christiana Analecta 256; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998), 195–202.

37. For studies on the Christian practice of praying at midnight, see Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Prayer Five Times in the Day and at Midnight: Two Apostolic Customs," *Studia Liturgica* 33 (2003): 1–19; Paul F. Bradshaw, "Prayer Morning, Noon, Evening, and Midnight: An Apostolic custom?" *Studia Liturgica* 13 (1979): 57–62; Henry Chadwick, "Prayer at Midnight," in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser; Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1972), 47–49; Wolfgang Speyer, "Mittag und Mitternacht als heilige Zeiten in Antike und Christentum," in *Vivarium: Festschrift Theodor Klauser zum 90. Geburtstag* (ed. Ernst Dassmann and Klaus Thraede; Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum Ergänzungsband 11; Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), 314–26. For the influence of Syriac traditions on the midnight office in the Roman church, see, for example, Heinz Kruse, "Ein audianisches Nachtgebet im römischen Brevier," *OrChr* 66 (1982): 75–97.

they are placed together.[38] A few examples selected from the collection may help to illustrate characteristic features of this material.

> O most merciful and compassionate one! O purifier of the blemishes of all sinners! Cleanse me with your purifying hyssop and have mercy on me.[39] As [with] the publican[40] and that sinful woman,[41] have mercy on me in your compassion. Messiah, sparing sinners from their debts, you who receive all who repent, savior of the race of our humanity, save me by your compassion.[42]

In addition to the use of New Testament figures, who have already been identified, this hymn also illustrates the frequent citation from the biblical Psalms. As seen above, this is one of the features of these hymns that appears also in later recensions of penitential prayers in the Byzantine Euchologion. In the *Supplications* most citations are from Ps 50, "Have mercy on me, O God . . . ," as in the above example.

The hymns of repentance in the *Supplications* rely for their effect on the use of the first person voice. This feature drives home the identification of the performer as well as of the audience with sinful characters who were forgiven:

> My thoughts disturbed me and troubled me. I cut off all hope for my life, because my debts grew great as the sea, and greater than its waves, my faults. Then I heard your grace that calls and says to sinners, "Call, and I will answer, knock, and I will open."[43] As a sinner I cry out to you, and like the publican I make supplication.[44] And like that son who squandered his riches, I have sinned in heaven and before you.[45] My Lord, there is no servant who does not sin. But the good Lord is not one who does not forgive. I who have sinned and provoked you to anger: spare me, save me in your compassion, and have mercy on me.[46]

38. See, for instance, Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, . . . opera selecta*, 247; trans. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula Corpus*, forthcoming.

39. Ps 50:7.

40. Luke 18:9–14.

41. Luke 7:36–50.

42. *Supplication* I.6 (ed. in *Breviarium juxta ritum ecclesiae antiochenae syrorum*, 3 vols. [Mausilus: Typus Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1886], *pars primum*, 77–126, here 78). Note that this hymn is not included in the manuscript on which Overbeck based his edition of the First Order of the *Supplications*. See Overbeck, *Ephraemi Syri, Rabbulae episcopi Edesseni, . . . opera selecta*, 245–48 (text), xx (description of the manuscript), xxxvii (table of contents); trans. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula Corpus*, forthcoming.

43. Matt 7:8; Luke 11:10.

44. Luke 18:10–13.

45. Luke 15:11–31.

46. Ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, . . . opera selecta*, 363; trans. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula Corpus*, forthcoming.

The identification of the sinner with those whom Jesus forgave is a rhetorical strategy similar to that found in the Euchologion, including a citation of words of Jesus, here from Matthew or Luke. Just as the Italo-Greek "Prayer of Expiation" described above, also the present hymn of supplication has three verbs that express forgiveness: *ḥūs . . . pᵉruq . . . w'etraḥḥam*, "spare . . . save . . . and have mercy." These three Syriac verbs would not be accurate translations of the three Hebrew verbs of the *viddui* prayer. Rather, the use of three verbs is a rhetorical device that concludes several of the hymns on repentance in this collection.[47]

The use of the first person is already well attested in Jewish penitential prayers; among these are Ps 51(50) and the Prayer of Manasseh.[48] Here the liturgical setting of these penitential hymns explains the use of the first person much more naturally than to create a fruitless search for the "Rabbula" behind them; the similar task of searching for the person or group behind the "I" of the penitential material in the Psalms should be a cautionary tale to the students of hymnography. Here, however, rather than identifying the "I" with a penitent king, the "I" is assumed by the penitent as a ritual model that is conducive to entering into an examination of conscience and toward a reception of the humility necessary for contrition. In this sense, these liturgical prayers attributed to Rabbula, as well as the other liturgical prayers of the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* and the *Hymn of Kassianē*, also have parallels with the regular liturgical prayers of the Qumran community, although there is no demonstrable direct line of development between Qumran and the hymnography discussed here.[49]

Another stylistic parallel between the "Prayer of those who are confessing" and the Syriac *Supplications* is the belief in the efficacy of tears. The Euchologion prayer mentioned "Peter and the prostitute,"[50] whose tears were accepted as repentance, in line 2. The identification of the penitent's tears with the prostitute's efficacious tears is explicit in the following hymn from the *Supplications*:

> She, who was blameworthy because of her practice but afterwards was praised because of her transformation,[51] carrying the aromatic oil poured it forth upon you,[52] saying, "My Lord, do not reject me, a whore." You who were born from a virgin, my Lord, do not reject the tears of my eyes, you [who are] the joy of

47. See ed. Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, . . . opera selecta*, 373; tr. Phenix and Horn, *The Rabbula Corpus*, forthcoming.

48. For a discussion of the first person aspect of these two prayers, see Newman, "Form and Settings of the Prayer of Manasseh," 116–21.

49. See Daniel K. Falk, "Scriptural Interpretation for Penitential Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 127–57.

50. See above, p. 234.

51. Luke 7:36–50.

52. Luke 7:38.

> the angels; but receive me who turns toward you and forgive me all that I have sinned against you, because of the multitude of your mercy.[53]

Even the designation of the sinful woman in Luke 7:37 as "prostitute" may be found in the *Supplications*, along with a particularly dense cluster of allusions from Luke:

> Lord, I did not resemble that tax collector, asking for forgiveness.[54] And I did not imitate the prostitute who shed tears in repentance.[55] And I did not raise my voice like that blind man: "Son of David, have mercy on me,"[56] but I abided in evil things. Being immortal, may you, my Lord, have mercy on me; you, my Lord, call me to repentance in the multitude of your compassion and kindness.[57]

Another identification that occurs with some frequency in the *Supplications* is with the five wise virgins of Matt 25:1–13:

> My Lord, do not hold back your gift from the sinners who call upon you, and do not close the door of your mercy on the penitents who knock thereon. Rather, in your mercy answer them their fitting requests, so that with their lamps blazing they may enter with you into the bridal chamber[58] and raise glory to your dominion. For this we glorify him, Christ the Remitter of debts, for he is glorified.[59]

These excerpts are representative of the palette of biblical images from which the author or authors of these hymns drew in order to create models with which the penitent could identify, and which served as precedents in the rhetoric of persuading divine mercy to act on behalf of the supplicant. From this comparison it is not possible to draw any specific connections between the development of prayers in the Euchologion and the *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula. Yet the evidence does suggest that Arranz's claim that many of the penitential prayers of the Byzantine tradition originated in a "Near Eastern" context deserves further research. Other collections of Syriac penitential hymns, such as the series *ḥo'en l^{e}ḥaṭṭoyê* preserved in the Maronite *Š^{e}ḥimto*, or *Breviarium*,[60] might also be explored in this regard.

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53. Ed. and trans. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula Corpus*, forthcoming.
54. Luke 18:13.
55. Luke 7:38.
56. Matt 15:22, Mark 10:47, and Luke 18:38.
57. Ed. and trans. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula Corpus*, forthcoming.
58. Allusion to Matt 25:1–13.
59. Ed. and trans. Phenix and Horn, *Rabbula Corpus*, forthcoming.
60. For an edition and German translation of the hymns that are attributed spuriously to Balai of Qenneshrin, see K. V. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der religiösen Dichtung*

With the possible exception of the three verbs that Arranz identified as connected with the *viddui* prayer of the synagogue, the Byzantine and Syriac prayers show little connection with prayers or passages on repentance in the Hebrew or Greek Bibles, or in the Pseudepigrapha. A search of the pseudepigraphical texts of the Old Testament that were collected by James Charlesworth revealed no clearly penitential prayers, with the exception of the Prayer of Manasseh, although one can find a considerable amount of material representing mention of intercession in those texts.[61] The overwhelmingly clear favorites used by authors of penitential prayers in the eastern Mediterranean Byzantine world consisted of episodes of repentance and forgiveness featured in the New Testament Gospels.

The penitential prayers from the Euchologion and those from the Rabbula corpus present examples of the interpretation of biblical characters that have echoes in texts from parabiblical texts from Qumran and from biblical literature. In many of these prayers, the stories of characters who received forgiveness are retold in a concise fashion, in order to emphasize their virtue of repentance and its heavenly reward as a mimetic model for both the penitent and the deity. Formally, the use of a short list of penitents from the Old and New Testaments is a device that recalls the paraphrase of individuals such as Joseph and Moses, whose "testimonia" (or in Greek, *plērophoriai*)[62] are found in works such as 4Q393;[63] Wisdom of Solomon 9–19; Acts 7; and Hebrews 11. 4Q393, which survives in eight fragments, also contains a list of heroes, "the armies of those mighty in strength," in the context of a penitential work.[64] This is a communal confession that recalls the sins of the fathers, identifies the community with their ancestors' transgressions, and seeks mercy based on a historical recollection of divine forgiveness. This general outline bears a resemblance to the selected hymns presented from the Rabbula collection. While here it is not the intention to trace the development of this genre of "hero list" in detail, some other features of this genre are of relevance for understanding the position of the Syriac material in the transmission process.

Chapters 9–11 of the Wisdom of Solomon illustrate that personified Wisdom acted to rescue and assist the key figures of biblical history and are part of

Balai's: nach den syrischen Handschriften des Britischen Museums (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902); and S. Landersdorfer, trans., *Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Dichter Cyrillonas, Baläus, Isaak von Antiochien und Jakob von Sarug* (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter 6; Kempten, Munich: Jos. Kösel, 1912).

61. See Charlesworth, "Prayer of Mannasseh," 625–33.

62. On the use of this term in Christian literature, see Cornelia Horn and Robert Phenix, *The* Plerophoriae *of John Rufus* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, in preparation).

63. For other works of similar genre at Qumran, see Daniel Falk, "4Q393: A Communal Confession," *JJS* 45 (1994): 184–207, here 184.

64. Bilhah Nitzan et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.XX: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 2* (DJD 29; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 45–61; English translation pp. 51, 55, 59 and in Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997), 381.

the "seven contrasts" of Wisdom 9–19, in which some sections reflect a pattern similar to Christian penitential hymns. Wisdom of Solomon 14:22–31 is a list of sins and their negative effects, followed in 15:1–6 by a statement of confidence in divine forgiveness, which begins, "But you, our God, are kind and true, patient, and ruling all things in mercy. For even if we sin we are yours, knowing your power."[65] The similarity to the transition from confession of sin to invocation of divine mercy found in Christian penitential literature is striking. Granted, some elements of this text, such as the statement in Wis 15:2b, "but we will not sin, because we know that you acknowledge us as yours," are inconsistent with the perspective behind the penitential prayers. This passage is embedded in a series of imprecations against false worship and thus does not have the same rhetorical function as the final statements of confidence found in the prayers of the Euchologia. Yet the formal aspect of this textual unit is a witness to elements that would be "distilled" in the course of time into the rhetorical form of these Christian prayers of confession.

Acts 7:2–53 and Heb 11, although not Second Temple Jewish texts, provide instances of testimonia in the form of a list of biblical heroes. In terms of their setting, these texts replicate oral speech acts: Acts 7 is the speech that the author created for Stephen, and Hebrews is the earliest surviving Christian homily. Although here the "hero list" is the primary formal point of comparison, there is also an aretalogical aspect to these texts. In Heb 11, the virtue of faith of the biblical patriarchs and prophets is appropriated for the identity of the Christian church.[66] In penitential prayers, repentant figures such as David or the sinful woman are appropriated as communal ideals that the church offers to the penitent as models. Through a recitation of the virtue of penance of past sinners, the penitent takes this virtue upon herself and in so doing not only participates in an act of personal forgiveness, but identifies herself with the ideals of the church. A similar aretalogical interpretation of biblical figures is attested in the parabiblical literature of Qumran. To take one text as an illustration, the story of Joseph that is preserved in 4Q371–373 is a fragmentary parabiblical text that identifies Joseph's sale and deportation with the exile of the Israelites from the land.[67] Although this text probably reflects an anti-Samaritan bias and is not, strictly speaking, a penitential text, it does contain the motif of sin–exile–return, which is a device at the

65. Quotations from the Wisdom of Solomon are from the NRSV.

66. For a discussion of this text, see Pamela M. Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context* (SBLDS 136; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), esp. 164–66.

67. Also 4QNarrative and Poetic Composition[a–c] (4Q371–373), in Moshe Bernstein, Monica Brady, et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4.XXVII: Miscellanea Part 2* (DJD 28; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 155–204. This work was formerly known as 4QApocryphon of Joseph and 4QapocrJoseph[a–c], English translation, 158 et passim and in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 530–31 and 545. Vermes groups 4Q373 under a different title, "A Moses (or David) Apocryphon."

heart of the development of penitential literature.[68] Robert Kugler suggested that this text, along with other parabiblical literature concerning Joseph, was adopted as reflecting the identity of the Qumran community, which understood itself to be in self-imposed exile from the temple and Jerusalem.[69] The role of penitence and penitential prayers in the identity of Qumran has been investigated by Rodney A. Werline, who identified penitence with the community's interpretative activity.[70] Although 4Q371–373 antedate Qumran, they were incorporated into the community's library, and this suggests that the community read these texts with the perspective illustrated in their sectarian works.

The lament of Joseph in 4Q372 is a common topos that is transmitted in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic parascriptural literature.[71] Other examples of Joseph texts associated with Qumran reinforce Kugler's observation. The use of the "hero lists" of famous penitents in Christian penitential literature is an example of the survival of a genre and a mechanism of biblical interpretation to create identity. This parabiblical literature about the figures in the Hebrew Bible begins at Qumran but developed into a rich and varied literary corpus at home in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The development of Christian penitential literature might be better situated if this transmission history were taken into account, rather than focusing on merely textual or theological parallels. This perspective suggests that scriptural interpretation, virtue, and the formation of communal identity through the ritual act of individual penance are further avenues for the study of the connections between penitential prayers in Second Temple Judaism and in Byzantine and Oriental Christianities.

In the next section, the interpretation of biblical episodes and characters

68. Eileen Schuller brought attention to the research on penitential prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls and indicated some of the fragmentary material from Cave 4 that deserves closer scrutiny in "Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: A Research Survey," in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 1–15, esp. 8–15. For the form of penitential prayer at Qumran, see Richard J. Bautch, *Developments in Genre between Post-exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament* (SBLAcBib 7; Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2003), 137–72; and Falk, "4Q393: A Communal Confession," 199–207.

69. Robert A. Kugler, "Joseph at Qumran: The Importance of 4Q372 Frg. 1 in Extending a Tradition," in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich* (ed. Peter W. Flint, Emanuel Tov, and James C. VanderKam; VTSup 101; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), 261–78.

70. Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLEJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 126–59, esp. 134–35.

71. For a recent study of the inculturation of Joseph's lament at Rachel's tomb, see Robert Phenix, "The *Sermons on Joseph* of Balai of Qennešrīn (early fifth century CE) as a Witness to the Transmission History and Interpretive Development of Joseph Traditions," in *Midrash in Context: Proceedings of the 2006 and 2007 SBL Consultation on Midrash* (ed. Lieve Teugels and Rivka Ulmer; Judaism in Context; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, forthcoming in 2008).

central to the genre of penitential prayers is considered for the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*, a liturgical poem of great importance in the Byzantine observance of Great Lent. It provides an example of a parallel line of interpretation, centered on the anthropology of the biblical characters and the nature of sin and repentance.

The *Canon of St. Andrew*, Bishop of Crete

The best known and perhaps most profound liturgical expression of *penthos* in the Byzantine tradition is the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*. The exact date of its composition is not known. Andrew of Crete's lifetime extended from ca. 660 to 720 C.E. The year 692 C.E. serves as *terminus ante quem* for the composition of this canon, since the Council of Trullo that took place in that same year ordered that this canon be recited during the Great Fast. Subsequently, it was moved from that context and now is recited at Compline, divided into sections that are distributed from Monday through Thursday of the first week and in its entirety at Matins on Thursday of the fifth week. Yet despite the popularity of this work, its profound sense of sin, and its skillful adaptation of liturgical form and biblical material, thus far the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* has received relatively little scholarly attention.[72]

The structure of the work is based on the nine canticles or odes that are inspired by nine poetic passages in the Old and New Testament.[73] These canticles are highlights from the Old and New Testaments read as salvation history.

72. For a few exceptions see Donna Kristoff, "A View of Repentance in Monastic Liturgical Literature," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 28 (1984): 263–86; and the helpful introduction with Italian translation of the text in Olivier Clément, *Il canto delle lacrime: Saggio sul pentimento* (Milan: Àncora, 1983; repr. 2002). More widely studied are Andrew's homilies and his work as a preacher. For a recent consideration, see, for example, Mary B. Cunningham, "Andrew of Crete: A High-style Preacher of the Eighth Century," in *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (ed. Mary B. Cunningham and Pauline Allen; A New History of the Sermon 1; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 267–93.

73. These passages are Exod 15:1–19; Deut 32:1–43; 1 Sam 2:1–10; Hab 3:2–19; Isa 26:9–20; Jonah 2:3–10; Dan 3:26–45; 3:52–88; and Luke 1:46–55, 68–79. As excerpts from Scripture, they are usually printed after the Psalms in the Greek Bible, along with other odes that are not used in the Byzantine canon: Isa 5:1–9; 38:10–20; Luke 2:29-32; the Prayer of Manasseh; and the Great Doxology; these last two are not found elsewhere in the Bible. Outside of penitential canons, Byzantine canons do not have *troparia* for the Second Ode (Deut 32:1-43), which is considered a penitential poem. For a comparative study of some of this material, see also James Mearns, *The Canticles of the Christian Church Eastern and Western, in Early and Medieval Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914). For a more recent discussion of the origins of the canon of odes in Byzantine worship, see Gregor M. Hanke, "Der Odenkanon des Tagzeitenritus Konstantinopels im Licht der Beiträge H. Schneiders und O. Strunks: Eine Relecture," in *Crossroad of Cultures: Studies in Liturgy and Patristics in Honor of Gabriele Winkler* (ed. Hans-Jürgen Feulner, Elena Velkovska, and Robert F. Taft; Orientalia Christiana Analecta 260; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2000), 345–67.

The canticles themselves are no longer read as part of the canon, but the hymns composed for each canticle loosely reflect one or more of its themes.[74] Into this framework the composer incorporated numerous allusions to biblical persons and episodes that constitute a sequential summary retelling of most of the Octateuch, followed by a summary of the prophetic literature and important episodes from the Gospels.

The *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* is an expression of ideas concerning the concept of sin and its force of separating humankind from the realm of the divine. It is a poetic sermon addressed to the soul, which the speaker rouses to penitence. Nevertheless no single specific sin is being mentioned in the entire work. As in the *Supplications* attributed to Bishop Rabbula, exegesis of sinful characters also constitutes a feature that is common in the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*. A few *troparia* explicitly recommend the imitation of a biblical episode,[75] for example, *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* 8.9: "Thou hast heard, O soul, how Jeremiah, in the muddy pit, cried with lamentation for the city of Zion, and seek thou for tears: imitate his life of lamentation, and be saved," an allusion to Jer 38:6.[76] The author has employed the metaphor of a prophetic call to repentance in order to represent the sinner's own compunction. This metaphorical interpretation of episodes of sin and repentance is an interpretative technique that is not present in the Syriac *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula. Most instances of biblical interpretation in the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* are more fully developed than the example of Jeremiah. Herein lies a further important distinction between the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* and the Syriac *Supplications* connected with Rabbula's name: the former employs the sinful characters as types of the state of the soul, while the latter makes use of them more directly as examples of repentance to be emulated. The comparison of one example from each one of the two may serve as illustration.

Taken from the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*, the fifth *troparion* of Ode 1

74. For a discussion of the transition from the use of canticles to hymns accompanying psalmody in the office of the hours in the Armenian tradition, see, for example, Gabriele Winkler, "The Armenian Night Office (II): The Unit of Psalmody, Canticles, and Hymns with Particular Emphasis on the Origins and Early Evolution of Armenia's Hymnography," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 17 (1983): 471–551, reprinted in Gabriele Winkler, *Studies in Early Christian Liturgy and Its Context* (Variorum Collected Studies Series; Aldershot, Great Britain/Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1997), ch. 6.

75. A *troparion* is a short hymn, usually a single stanza, sung as part of a larger work or as one prayer in a liturgical office.

76. Sister Katherine and Sister Thekla, *Saint Andrew of Crete, The Great Canon; Saint Mary of Egypt, The Life* (Library of Orthodox Thinking; Normanby, Whitby, North Yorkshire, England: Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Assumption, 1974), 57. For a less literal but more liturgical translation of the *Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete*, see Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary, *The Lenton Triodion* (Service Books of the Orthodox Church; London/Boston: Faber & Faber, 1978). There is no prayer from the muddy cistern in the book of Jeremiah, nor, to the knowledge of the authors, does any pseudepigraphical work related to Jeremiah include one.

reads, "Instead of Eve of the flesh, I have Eve of the mind, in thoughts of sensual passion, seemingly sweet, but ever tasting of the bitter down-gulping."[77] When considering this example, one does well to keep in mind that Eve is not a particularly good model for repentance because her sin cannot be repeated and because in Genesis she does not repent! Thus, quite consequently in the *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula, a work that approaches sinners and repentance in the Bible from a more literal perspective, there is no mention of Eve in any of the hymns of repentance. Yet in the example just offered from the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*, the author managed to create from Eve's sin in Gen 3 an image of the penitent's state of sin by way of following the line of interpretation begun in 2 Cor 11:3 (NRSV). In that verse, Paul formulated, "But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere [and pure] devotion to Christ." Eve's sin is conceived of as having disobeyed the commandment not to eat from the fruit of the tree at the center of the Garden of Eden, rather than having committed the act itself. Such interpretation of an Old Testament passage through an allusion to it that is found also in the New Testament constitutes the most common rhetorical technique employed in the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*. This technique captures the universal properties of sin, in order to promote in each hearer a personal act of contrition.

One encounters another example of biblical interpretation revealing the author's concern with the disposition of the thought of the penitent in *troparia* 14 and 15 of Ode 1. This text interprets the pericope of the man who fell into the hands of thieves in the parable of the Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37):

> I have fallen among thieves, thoughts of my own: now I am wounded by them all over, battered and bruised. But come to me, thyself, Christ Savior, to heal me.[78] The priest seeing me passed me by and the Levite looking on my distress disdained my nakedness. But Jesus, risen of Mary, come thou to have pity on me.[79]

With these *troparia* the author created characters from the Bible as ready-made foils. A reader could easily step into them and feel encouraged to seek repentance. This technique, which is a rhetorical device of characterization, establishes a biblical precedent by which the penitent appeals to God, agreeing to and following a

77. Sister Katherine and Sister Thecla, *Saint Andrew of Crete, The Great Canon*, 29.

78. Although the theme of healing in connection with sin cannot be developed further in the context of the present discussion, studies of Orthodox Christian perspectives on penance and prayer from centuries subsequent to the Byzantine period have noted the thoroughly therapeutic character ascribed to prayers offered in the context of penance. See, for example, the study by Angelo Amato, "La dimension 'thérapeutique' du sacrement de la pénitence dans la théologie et la praxis de l'Église greco-orthodoxe," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 67 (1983): 233–54.

79. Sister Katherine and Sister Thecla, *Saint Andrew of Crete, The Great Canon*, 30.

logic that rationalizes and argues with God: "you saved X on this (biblical) occasion, and now that I am in a similar situation, and am also repenting as she or he has done, save me as well." Examples of this arrangement of the argument of repentance abound in the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*, including *troparion* 4 of Ode 2: "The storm of evils surrounds me, compassionate Lord: but as unto Peter, so unto me, stretch forth thy hand," and *troparion* 5 of the same Ode: "The tears of the Harlot, the Pitiful One, I too proffer thee: be merciful to me, O Savior, in thy tender compassion."[80] This concept of precedent is identical to the rhetorical logic of the penitential prayers from the Byzantine Euchologion discussed above. In particular, as examined above, Peter and the harlot (or prostitute) are also mentioned in the "Prayer of those who are confessing."

Apart from the *Canon of St. Andrew*, the rest of the Byzantine Triodion, which contains all of the prayers and hymns recited during the liturgical observances of Great Lent, offers a wealth of material for the study of rhetoric, interpretation, and genre in penitential prayers. A careful study of the Triodion would also reveal historical development, because there are "non-standard" Triodia, which contain prayers that did not become part of the "canonical" collection. This development could be easily connected with the rich material found in Oriental Christian penitential prayers, such as those in the Armenian Book of Hymns or *Girk' Šaraknots'*, and in the Syriac collections of hymns for Great Lent.

The *Hymn of Kassianē*

The *Hymn of Kassianē* is singled out for presentation and study because it provides an example of the use of characterization to interpret a biblical character associated with penitential prayer, and because it is the only example of a detailed account of the anthropology of a female penitential subject, composed by a gifted woman hymnographer.[81] It is one of the few Byzantine hymns on a penitential theme, apart from the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*, that have received at least some scholarly attention.[82] For this reason it is fitting and necessary also to offer some consideration of this text in the present article. Despite its location among the penitential hymnography of the Byzantine Holy Wednesday Matins service,

80. Luke 7:37–42. The harlot is a character who recurs with frequency. See Sister Katherine and Sister Thecla, *Saint Andrew of Crete, The Great Canon*, 33. See also *Canon of St. Andrew* 9.18–19 (trans. Sister Katherine and Sister Thecla, *Saint Andrew of Crete, The Great Canon*, 62).

81. See, for example, Jane Hirshfield, ed., *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 53–54; and Eva Catafygiotu Topping, "Kassiane the Nun and the Sinful Woman," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 26 (1981): 201–9.

82. See, for example, the comments in Ilse Rochow, *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia* (Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 38; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1967), 8.

the *Hymn of Kassianē* may be characterized more properly as a poetic interpretation of a biblical passage based on characterization, and as such unique among Kassianē's corpus.

Kassianē (also known as Kassia) was a gifted female hymnographer of the ninth century.[83] She composed an extensive corpus of hymns, many of which have been accepted into the standard texts of Byzantine liturgical services.[84] None of her work has received much attention, and this neglect is undeserved. The one exception in this lacuna of scholarship is the short hymn that Kassianē composed about the sinful woman of Luke 7:36–48. References to biblical parallels noted above may serve as indications that this was a theme that informed many of the poems and other compositions with penitential character in the Byzantine world.[85] The Byzantine Triodion places this hymn as one to be sung at Matins of Holy Wednesday.[86] It is in fact the dismissal *sticheron*, the last hymn sung in the service, chanted in Tone Eight, right before the priest gives the final blessing or dismissal. Nearly all of the hymns chanted at the Matins service of Holy Wednesday in the Byzantine church deal with the topic of the sinful woman from Luke's Gospel, such that the entire service is dedicated to this episode and its themes of repentance and divine mercy.

The *Hymn of Kassianē* (Hymn for Holy Wednesday) reads as follows:

Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα γυνὴ,
τὴν σὴν αἰσθομένη Θεότητα, μυροφόρου ἀναλαβοῦσα τάξιν,

83. Only little is known about Kassianē's life. A helpful assessment of her life, work, and theology is offered by Anna M. Silvas, "Kassia the Nun c. 810–865: An Appreciation," in *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience AD 800–1200* (ed. Lynda Garland; Publications of the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College, London 8; Aldershot, England/Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006), 41–76. See also the introduction in Antonía Tripolitis, *Kassia: The Legend, the Woman, and Her Work* (Garland Library of Medieval Literature 84, Series A; New York/London: Garland, 1992), xxi–xxiv. For a fuller study, see Rochow, *Studien zu der Person*. See also Karl Krumbacher, *Kasia* (Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und der historischen Klasse der Königlich-bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1897, Heft III; Munich: Verlag der Königlich-Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, in Kommission des G. Franz'schen Verlags [J. Roth], 1897), 305–70.

84. These hymns have been collected and presented with Greek text, based on the best available editions, and English translation, bibliography, and notes in Tripolitis, *Kassia: The Legend, the Woman, and Her Work*.

85. For a study tracing the usage of the pericope of the sinful woman in one particular Eastern Christian tradition, see, for example, Susan A. Harvey, "Why the Perfume Mattered: The Sinful Woman in Syriac Exegetical Tradition," in *In Dominico Eloquio / In Lordly Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Wilken* (ed. P. Blowers, A. Christman, D. Hunter, and R. Darling Young; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 69–89.

86. All Matins services in the Byzantine Holy Week are celebrated after sundown the day before, and thus Matins of Holy Wednesday is sung on Tuesday evening, which has led some commentators to erroneously state that the Hymn of Kassianē occurs at "Vespers of Holy Tuesday."

ὀδυρομένη μύρον σοι πρὸ τοῦ ἐνταφιασμοῦ κομίζει·
Οἴμοι! λέγουσα, ὅτι νύξ με συνέχει οἶστρος ἀκολασίας.
ζοφώδης τε καὶ ἀσέληνος, ἔρως τῆς ἁμαρτίας·
δέξαι μου τὰς πηγὰς τῶν δακρύων,
ὁ νεφέλαις στημονίζων τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ ὕδωρ·
κάμφθητί μοι πρὸς τοὺς στεναγμοὺς τῆς καρδίας,
ὁ κλίνας τοὺς οὐρανοὺς τῇ ἀφράστῳ σου κενώσει·
καταφιλήσω τοὺς ἀχράντους σου πόδας,
ἀποσμήξω τούτους δὲ πάλιν τοῖς τῆς κεφαλῆς μου βοστρύχοις·
ὧν ἐν τῷ Παραδείσῳ Εὔα τὸν δελινὸν
κρότον τοῖς ὠσὶν ἠχηθεῖσα, τῷ φόβῳ ἐκρύβη·
ἁμαρτιῶν μου τὰ πλήθη καὶ κριμάτων σου ἀβύσσους,
τίς ἐξιχνιάσει, ψυχοσῶστα, Σωτήρ μου;
μή με τὴν σὴν δούλην παρίδῃς ὁ ἀμέτρητον ἔχων τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.[87]

Lord, the woman who had fallen into many sins,
perceiving your divinity, took up the role of myrrh-bearer,
and with lamentation brings sweet myrrh to you before your burial.
"Alas!" she says, "for night is for me a frenzy of lust,
a dark and moonless love of sin.
Accept the fountains of my tears,
you who from the clouds draw out the water of the sea;
bow yourself down to the groanings of my heart,
you who bowed the heavens by your ineffable self-emptying.
I shall kiss your immaculate feet,
and wipe them again with the locks of my hair,
those feet whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise,
and hid herself in fear.
Who can search out the multitude of my sins and the depths of your judgments,
my Savior, savior of souls?
Do not despise me, your servant, for you have mercy without measure."[88]

With the help of an icon of words, Kassianē depicted in this *sticheron* a tableau of a woman's encounter with the liturgical celebration of Holy Week and with the resurrected Christ. The sinful woman of the poem becomes the first of the

87. The Greek text is that reprinted in Tripolitis, *Kassia. The Legend, the Woman, and Her Work*, 76, 78.

88. Recently, Archimandrite Ephraem has produced a translation of the Holy Wednesday Matins service based on his critical study of Greek and Slavonic Triodia. This translation is available at his Web site, http://www.anastasis.org.uk/HWWed-M.htm. It is his translation of the *Hymn of Kassiane* that we have adopted for this article (modifying it to suit the spelling conventions of standard American English), since we appreciate the balance he achieves between a faithful rendering of the Greek and a consideration of the liturgical qualities and application of the text.

myrrh-bearers, a foreshadowing of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.[89]

In Jewish literature, perhaps the closest parallel to this hymn is the prayer of Judith (Jdt 9:1–14). Both are laments in genre, although there are few specific textual or thematic parallels. This hymn expresses sin generally through the specific instance of sexual lust. This is consistent with the use of feminine imagery, as the symbol of sexual sin, which is itself often a metaphor for apostasy, committed by both genders, or as a symbol of the apostasy of Israel.[90] Even though it is known that the author of the *Hymn of Kassianē* is a woman, she has appropriated this use of feminine metaphor in her hymn, and this suggests a certain canonicity of this imagery in Christian poetry.

The central aspect of this hymn is the sinful woman's first-person speech, which is an example of biblical interpretation through *ēthopoiia*, a rhetorical device expressing the *ethos* or character of an individual; it is unique among the hymns examined thus far.[91] The prayers offered in the Euchologion mention her as a model of repentance. Kassianē's poem does not contain the rhetorical arrangement of an appeal to precedent. Rather, it is a literary composition in a strict sense: the sinful woman is a character of literature, a portrait of a particular instance of repentance crafted to evoke a similar sense of repentance in the audience. Kassianē imagined the thoughts of the sinful woman and, using the devices of poetry and rhetoric, gave expression to these very thoughts. The words are not composed for the listener to pray along, as in the penitential prayers of the Euchologion and the *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula. Nor is the work intended to be a meditation on the nature of sin and repentance, as is often the case in the *stichera* of the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*. Kassianē's hymn is penitential because the subject whom she takes from Luke undergoes repentance; her characterization brings to the fore what is already present in the character as presented in Scripture.[92]

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89. Catafygiotu Topping ("Kassiane the Nun and the Sinful Woman") provides a literary critique of this hymn.

90. The intersection of feminine imagery and Judith's prayer is discussed in LeAnn Snow Flesher, "The Use of Female Imagery and Lamentation in the Book of Judith: Penitential Prayer or Petition for Obligatory Action?" in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 83–104, here 91–93.

91. For a discussion of *ēthopoiia* in the interpretation of Syriac poetry as exemplifed in the hymns on the Joseph story (Gen 37; 39–50) by Balai of Qenneshrin, see Robert Phenix, *The Sermons on Joseph of Balai of Qenneshrin: Rhetoric and Interpretation in Fifth-Century Syriac Literature* (STAC; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, forthcoming in late fall 2008).

92. One might compare Kassianē's sinful woman to the penitent Aseneth in *Joseph and Aseneth*. Aseneth's lengthy prayers of repentance are vehicles of *ēthopoiia*; they are not intended to be philosophical reflections; much less are they models of penitential prayer, and for this reason they were not included in the present discussion. Nevertheless, the penitential qualities of Aseneth's prayer do deserve separate study. See now also the comments by Eileen

Kassianē adopted the character of the sinful woman from the Holy Wednesday Matins service itself, but she did so in a manner that sets it apart from the rest of that service, as well as from the penitential hymns in the Euchologion that also mention this episode. The hymnographer refers to her subject with the phrase "the woman who had fallen into many sins," which is more accurate than the frequent, infamous title of πόρνη, "prostitute," found in the penitential prayers of the Byzantine Euchologia, and in the Holy Wednesday Matins service.[93] Commentators have remarked that, with this phrase, Kassianē elevated her treatment of the subject above the infatuation with a prostitute to a description of a character with whom any penitent person might identify.[94] The emphasis on the "harlot" in the rest of the Holy Wednesday Matins service serves as an example for the penitent, as might be expected. Yet several hymns show her in contrast to Judas, who betrayed his master for money. Several *stichera* are dedicated to Judas and his plot to betray Jesus, giving the impression that the present Holy Wednesday service is the result of at least two distinct liturgical traditions for this day.

Kassianē's use of the image of Eve in this hymn deserves some comment, particularly in relation to what has been mentioned above concerning her appearance in the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete*. Both of these hymns conceive of Eve as a negative example, and Kassianē used Eve, who did not repent, as a foil for the sinful woman, who is a model of repentance.[95] Moreover, although Kassianē and the *Canon of St. Andrew* do not elaborate on Eve, she serves an important rhetorical function. The interpretation of Eve as an unrepentant woman is a reflection of Eve as a character. Genesis 3 is unconcerned with the notion of repentance; its function is largely etiological, to provide an explanation for the origins of human suffering and for the introduction of the fatal flaw that would culminate in the destruction of the world in Gen 6, and of Jerusalem in 2 Kings. A characterization of Eve constitutes an interpretation of this text. For Kassianē, Eve is motivated by fear of divine punishment, while the sinful woman is motivated by hope in a limitless divine mercy. The sinful woman and Eve are not merely antitypes of the sinner; in this hymn, they are examples of different motivations, one leading to forgiveness and healing, the other to avoidance of the source of healing, which is the result of a perhaps unreflective rhetorical interpretation of these two biblical episodes.

Schuller in "Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism" and "Afterword" in vol. 2 of *Seeking the Favor of God*.

93. To be sure, some of the hymns in this service also omit the word πόρνη.

94. H. J. W. Tillyard, "A Musical Study of the Hymns of Casia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 20 (1911): 420–85, here 433. Catafygiotu Topping ("Kassiane the Nun and the Sinful Woman," 207) remarked, "With a long, dignified phrase Kassiane the Nun introduces her subject. . . . More delicate and less cruel than the hymnographers who insisted on calling the sinner a πόρνη, Kassiane, nevertheless, vividly describes the woman's utter degradation."

95. Catafygiotu Topping ("Kassiane the Nun and the Sinful Woman," 209) also makes remarks to this effect.

Both Kassianē and the author of the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* illustrate biblical interpretation in penitential prayers that relies on the rhetoric of characterization, and for this reason they stand apart from the trajectory traced in the *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula of Edessa and the Byzantine Euchologion. In terms of genre, there are many biblical and rhetorical elements that these two groups of texts share. Further investigation might demonstrate the extent to which the development of Byzantine liturgy, particularly during Great Lent, might provide a common literary background for exploration of the question of relationship. This literary background includes rhetoric and rhetorical training in Byzantium, in order to set the development of rhetoric and the genre of penitential prayers in their proper historical and cultural settings, and to provide a clearer understanding of how different currents in Byzantine penitential literature are related to one another.

Summary

The origins and development of penitential hymns and their theological foundations in Byzantine Christianity can be discovered through an approach that incorporates rhetoric, genre, and biblical interpretation. Within such a framework, the historical study of these hymns might benefit from a comparative study of earlier Syriac penitential hymns, though this need not be the only source of comparative material. This article has provided a brief overview of how the extant material in the Byzantine corpus can be assessed, even if firm conclusions remain well outside its scope.

It is possible to see the beginnings of a sketch of the development. As a still preliminary conclusion concerning the penitential hymns presented in the Greek Euchologion, in the Syriac *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula, and the Greek *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* one may observe the close connection between the anthropology of sin, rhetoric, and biblical interpretation. The prayers of the Euchologion and the *Supplications* present biblical models of repentance as rhetorical devices that serve to elicit forgiving the sinner as God's response to sin. Throughout, the argument is arranged on the principle of precedent. Biblical material serves primarily as evidence provided after a brief exclamation to the divine addressee in the prayers found in the Euchologion and the *Supplications* attributed to Rabbula. One important trend in the redaction of Byzantine prayers is the increase in the use of material from biblical Psalms, which might in turn reflect the dominance of liturgical psalmody on the rhetoric and interpretation of the stock biblical episodes of repentance. The *Hymn of Kassianē* and the *Canon of St. Andrew of Crete* present a different tradition, diverging even from the other material included in the Triodion. How this material fits together historically and how it develops in later Byzantine penitential hymnography are interesting questions that can be answered effectively when philology is informed by literary analysis.

The connections between the Christian penitential prayers surveyed in this

discussion and Second Temple Jewish penitential literature are characterized by the adoption of several motifs that are integral to Jewish literature, even if there are no precise structural correlations. These texts suggest that the Christians who composed them were concerned with imprinting their identity onto literary elements that can be discerned in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple, and were not concerned with maintaining a Jewish penitential tradition. However, Jewish parabiblical literature such as material found at Qumran and the role of topoi such as the "hero list," also attested in early Christian sources, hold out the potential for more robust comparative research. The first steps in attempting to discern critical connections among these diverse bodies of literature must be a careful analysis of the Christian material, which lags behind the study of its counterparts in Judaism. Investigation of form, rhetorical devices, biblical interpretation, and the interaction of the penitent in the identity of the Christian church are all areas of opportunity for further exploration.

Afterword

Richard S. Sarason

As in the previous two volumes, the author of the keynote article has been invited to reflect in an afterword on the larger issues raised herein. My specific task, as framed by co-editor Mark Boda, is "to provide a critical reflection and review of the work of the consultation represented in the chapters of this particular volume, [tracing some common trajectories,] and then again to identify key issues that still need to be reexamined, resolved, or pursued."[1] The difference between my remarks and those of Samuel Balentine and Eileen Schuller who preceded me in this task, of course, is that I am now privileged to look back across the entire trajectory of the three volumes and to offer some comments from that perspective. That seems indeed to be the best place to begin.

My initial remarks on methodology in the keynote article have been well borne out, variously, in all of the articles in this volume as well as those in volume 2, to which I referred there. Once the framework of interpretation shifts from examining the four paradigmatic penitential prayers in the Hebrew Bible (Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 1:5–11; 9:6–37; Dan 9:4–19) against the background of the Psalms (particularly the so-called laments or complaint psalms) and other prayer texts within that corpus to analyzing the larger diachronic trajectory of penitential prayers and other petitionary prayers containing penitential elements[2] across the

1. E-mail communication, May 23, 2008.

2. This is a crucial definitional point. Several authors in vols. 2 (Schuller, Chazon, Falk) and 3 (myself, Langer, Kimelman, Reif, Claussen, and Phenix and Horn) variously call attention to the fact that penitential prayer is a particular kind of petitionary prayer. This becomes most obvious when one focuses, as these authors do, on matters of rhetoric and rhetorical stance. Petitions function as persuasive speech, designed to produce an effect in the hearer and thereby to achieve a result. In the case of penitential prayer, that result includes forgiveness and reconciliation to be sure, but more often goes beyond those to include salvation, redemption, or rectification of a problematic situation as well. The bulk of Jewish penitential prayers ultimately seek corporate redemption and restoration to an idealized situation in the Land of Israel (typified by the Deuteronomic blessings) before the exile. Even the "paradigmatic four" penitential prayers in the Hebrew Bible need to be read from this perspective: Dan 9:17–19 pleads for the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem; Neh 1:11 asks for successful intervention with the Persian king on behalf of Nehemiah's plan to assist in the rebuilding of Jerusalem; Neh 9 needs to be read in conjunction with Neh 10, where the people vow to take upon themselves all of the laws of the Torah, implicitly in order to ensure their corporate and individual

history of Judaism and Christianity, the problems of a narrow form-critical perspective become even more obvious. The fluidity of use and the constant recontextualization of elements identified as penitential are most striking as we move across temporal, geographical, cultural, theological, and literary spaces. Eileen Schuller's problematization of a tight definition of penitential prayer in light of the multifarious evidence from the later Second Commonwealth era is even more on the mark when we move on to both the Jewish and Christian evidence from late antiquity and the medieval periods.[3] The evidence of the present volume strongly supports the claim that we must constantly be paying attention to the *multiple* contexts (liturgical, ideational, psychological, social-cultural, temporal) that *simultaneously* shape these prayers/prayer texts as well as the nonverbal language[4] (gestures such as prostration; behaviors such as fasting, weeping, acts of self-mortification, etc.) that accompany them, and that our primary focus should be on the various deployments of penitential *rhetoric* as shaped by and to these multiple contexts.[5] That is to say, the *differences* among these prayers are as significant as their similarities, and both need to be the subjects of our attention, since we are dealing, *ipso facto*, with "themes and variations." Our interpretation of these themes and variations must always be context-specific, while factoring in as many different elements of the context as possible. We must also pay attention to the ways in which these materials interact with, reuse, reinterpret, and reshape the biblical penitential and prayer traditions and materials that they have inherited. All of these issues are particularly well framed and illustrated in the present volume in the masterful essay by Robert Phenix Jr. and Cornelia Horn on Byzantine liturgies, but they run throughout.

Permit me now to attempt a broad schematization of the results of the several

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well-being. The implicit petition in Ezra 9 is for God to withhold his justified anger and not to punish the people for having intermarried with the locals.

3. See Schuller's remarks in both her keynote essay and her afterword in *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2, *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline; SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1–15 and 227–37. These remarks, together with the detailed analyses of specific prayer texts in volume 2, subsequently prompted Rodney Werline to rethink the definitional issues involved here; see Werline, "Reflections on Penitential Prayer: Definition and Form," in Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God*, 2:209–25.

4. I use here the terminology of Uri Ehrlich, *The Nonverbal Language of Prayer: A New Approach to Jewish Liturgy* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), and the literature on nonverbal communication cited by him there on p. 4 n. 11.

5. What remains constant from the late biblical penitential prayers down through the prayers of rabbinic Judaism and Christianity examined in this volume are certain kinds of penitential *rhetoric* designed to persuade the addressee (God) to grant the requests of the petitioners: appeals to God's benevolent character, the invocation of precedents for forgiveness (such as lists of biblical characters who have been forgiven in the past), etc. See on this particularly Phenix and Horn in this volume, pp. 252–54, but also Sarason, pp. 11–12; Kimelman, pp. 74–77, 80; Reif, pp. 87, 89, 91.

studies in the present volume. I acknowledge at the outset that such a schematization necessarily oversimplifies, but it also may serve useful heuristic purposes; the requisite "thick descriptions" are to be found (and indeed must be found) in the individual studies. Notwithstanding the diversity of these studies, there is in fact a considerable amount of convergence here, both methodological and substantive. Drawing on the initial characterizations in my keynote article as well as those of my colleagues in this volume, we might conceptualize the large trajectory of penitential prayer (and the penitential stance or penitential elements within prayer) in rabbinic Judaism as follows.

Initially, full-blown penitential prayer (characterized by confession, requests for forgiveness and pardon, the rhetoric and gestures of human self-abasement vis-à-vis divine justification, accompanied by fasting and additional abstention from physical pleasure) is confined in the communal realm to the biblically mandated Day of Atonement and fast days occasioned by local crises (such as drought). There are strong elements of continuity here with pre-70 praxis on account of the shared biblical roots and similar acts of biblical interpretation, notwithstanding the fact that the verbal liturgy is more fully elaborated only after the destruction of the Temple. Viewed from this perspective, it is hardly coincidental that among the earliest genres of *piyyuṭim* (liturgical hymns, the style coming to full flower only in the Byzantine period) are the *seliḥot*, extended poetic lists of sins and petitions for forgiveness, as noted in Laura Lieber's article.

The daily communal petitionary prayer (the Amidah), a post-70 rabbinic innovation, on the other hand, is characterized only by penitential *elements* (themes, rhetoric), since its climactic concerns are with the corporate restoration of Israel to its land and polity. The penitential elements in this prayer sequence are to be found explicitly in the fifth and sixth of the weekday eighteen benedictions, but these are contextually related to the fourth and seventh benedictions as well, as noted by Reuven Kimelman and Stefan Reif. (Reif's reconstruction of a basic version of the petition for forgiveness of course remains hypothetical, though rhetorically plausible.[6] Kimelman's insistence that the redemption referred to in the seventh benediction is personal/individual may be too categorical, given some of the variant wordings of the benediction in both the Land of Israel and Babylonia that stress the communal aspect; the two understandings are not mutually exclusive, particularly in a liturgical context.)

6. A similar methodology has been employed, working exhaustively with genizah texts of the Amidah, by Uri Ehrlich in a series of Hebrew articles: "An Early Version of the *Gevurot*, *Kedushat ha-Shem*, and *Da'at* Benedictions according to a New Fragment of a Palestinian Siddur," *Tarbiz* 73 (2005): 555–84 (cited above by Reif); "More Palestinian Versions of the Eighteen Benedictions Prayer from the Cairo Genizah," *Kobez al yad* 19 [29] (2006): 1–22; "A Complete Ancient Palestinian Version of the Eighteen Benedictions Prayer from the Cairo Genizah," *Kobez al yad* 18 [28] (2005): 3–22; "On the Ancient Version of the Benediction, 'Builder of Jerusalem' and the Benediction of David," *Pe'amim* 78 (1999): 16–43; and, with Ruth Langer, "The Earliest Texts of the *Birkat Haminim*," *HUCA* 76 (2005): 63–112.

Otherwise, more extended penitential rhetoric (both verbal and gestural—"falling on one's face") is to be found in the *taḥanunim*, the semi-private supplicatory prayers recited by each individual following the weekday Amidah in the morning and afternoon (and, according to the evidence of some genizah manuscripts, also in the evening in one custom from the Land of Israel, no longer practiced). Ruth Langer's exemplary study of the genizah and early medieval materials here notes significantly that the penitential element (confession, requests for forgiveness) is quite prominent in the genizah texts (both of the Babylonian and Palestinian text-types) before it gets somewhat diluted by the various textual expansions in the later medieval rites. She also rightly notes that we cannot convincingly work backward from the tenth-century materials with regard to the prominence or even presence of penitential rhetoric in this relatively unstructured portion of the service; there is scant evidence for the penitential tenor of private supplications after the Amidah during the talmudic period (although, as I point out in my article here, some of the private prayers of the rabbis in the Babylonian Talmud *do* exhibit such a tenor).

The later medieval expansion of penitential elements into other parts of the service, the intensification of already existing practices such as *taḥanun* (see Lawrence Fine's discussion of the treatment of this rubric in the Zohar and by Luria, pp. 137–45), and the innovation of various full-blown penitential rites and practices derive mostly from pietistic-mystical circles (such as the twelfth-century *ḥasidê 'aškenaz* [German Pietists] and the sixteenth-century Lurianic kabbalists, about whom Fine has written here), and are expressive of their reformist ideologies. These groups were often critical of what they viewed as conventional, routinized communal praxis; their pietism (like that of the Christian monastic orders) demanded more intense rigor and inwardness, and they even saw their own penitential activities as having cosmic and theurgic import.

Biblical penitential language is routinely invoked in all of these contexts, whether through verse citations or through rhetorical and terminological modeling and adaptation—but the variation should be of as much interest to us as the conventional patterning, as Lieber makes clear.

In early Christianity, on the other hand, the initial situation is more complex, as both Rodney Werline and Paul Bradshaw have indicated—and even somewhat paradoxical, as Bradshaw insightfully remarks. Werline characterizes the circles around Jesus and John the Baptist depicted in the Synoptic Gospels (and particularly in the Q materials) as "penitential reform movements," urging penitence in anticipation of the impending eschatological judgment and the coming of God's kingdom. Similarly, Pauline rhetoric directed at Jews (but not at Gentiles) draws on common penitential traditions. But for early Christians, conversion, that is, baptism into the salvific death and resurrection of the Christ, becomes the ultimate act of penance; hence the initial disconnect noted by Werline and Bradshaw between early Christian ritual (the celebration of the Eucharist, the identification with the dead and risen Christ) and the Second Temple Jewish tradition of

penitential prayer. However, the persistence among redeemed Christians of their "unredeemed" human appetites, instincts, and behaviors raises the awkward and paradoxical question, "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom 6:2, duly noted by Bradshaw). How can it be that a redeemed person yet continues to sin, and what should be done about this? This generates a theological context for Christian penitence that differs from its Jewish predecessor and counterpart (which was always focused, at the collective level, on the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth in the Land of Israel under God's benevolent protection). Werline also notes that the increasingly Gentile social context of Christianity brings with it a different series of cultural expectations and implicit cultural knowledge, one less familiar with the specific Jewish traditions of penitential prayer, also contributing to the initial absence of such prayers from Christian literature. (Phenix and Horn rightly note that the Lord's Prayer in Matt 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4; and *Did.* 8:2 is not penitential, although it contains a quasi-penitential phrase, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"; Werline would view this as an example of the actual practice of confession of sin, but this might be an overinterpretation as regards the first-century context[7]).

Werline and Bradshaw note scattered exhortations in the Catholic Epistles (1 John 1:8–10; 5:16; Jas 5:16), *1 Clement* (56), and the *Didache* (4:14) to individual confession within the community and to prayer on behalf of those who have sinned. These exhortations have to do as well with communal discipline. According to the analysis of Carsten Claussen here, the *Didache*'s exhortations to confession (which must precede the celebration of the Lord's Supper) are addressed to individuals, not to the community as a collective. But their ultimate purpose is also social, the eschatological perfection of the believing community. Claussen further characterizes the ethos behind this document, and its goal of perfection, as that of a penitential reform movement.

The Christian evidence is further complicated by its geographical spread and emergence from within diverse Christian communities. The "penitential impulse" (this felicitous phrase is that of Lieber, p. 119) is often to be noted among those authors who exhort believers to greater moral and spiritual rigor. Exhortations to regular prayer for pardon (often in a kneeling posture and sometimes to

7. For later Christian understandings of this phrase and its functions, Werline's interpretation is more appropriate. Bradshaw (pp. 186–87) indicates that third-century Christian authors (Tertullian, Cyprian) viewed this phrase as an occasion to call for all Christians to pray regularly for pardon. He also notes (pp. 194–95) the suggestion of Robert Taft that this prayer was incorporated into some eucharistic rites in the second half of the fourth century precisely in order to include a prayer for forgiveness before receiving the Eucharist. Phenix and Horn (p. 227) make the important observation that, since this prayer has been incorporated into so many diverse liturgical contexts in Christian tradition, its liturgical import—and that of the embedded penitential phrase within it—must always be construed as specific to each of those liturgical contexts.

be accompanied by weeping) are variously found in such third-century writers as Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, and in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*. Bradshaw notes, however, that after the Christianization of the Roman Empire in the fourth century this penitential tone is not to be found in the "cathedral offices," the daily prayers in which ordinary Christians took part. Rather, it is cultivated among the monastic and ascetic movements (the penitential reform movements of their time), which sought a greater degree of spiritual rigor and challenge than that found in the praxis of the masses, as well as among those Christian authors who had been influenced by monastic spirituality (such as John Chrysostom, Basil of Caesarea, John Cassian, and the author of *De virginitate*). Bryan Spinks notes that the extensive penitential reflections of the Syrian fathers Aphrahat and Efrem were also directed at local monastic-type groups of pietists (called *Bnay Qyama*, children of the covenant). The influence of monastic piety was to become stronger in subsequent centuries; by the ninth–tenth centuries, formalized penitential prayers are to be found in the eucharistic rite and in such liturgical books as the Byzantine Euchologion, and some full-blown rites of penance (such as the east Syrian *Taksa d'Ḥussaya*) and absolution have come into existence. The studies on Christian penitential prayers in this volume extend no further chronologically than the tenth century.

I now wish to employ the preceding schematic overview heuristically to identify some areas and issues that I believe could usefully be pursued in further research proceeding from the studies in the present volume and, to some extent, its two predecessors. As I remarked earlier, there are some striking areas of convergence (or parallelism) in the two trajectories, Jewish and Christian, that are traced in this volume. Some of these are structural-functional-contextual, while others may have resulted from actual historical interaction between the two traditions. The latter present a fertile (but practically difficult) area for future research, but let me first note a few of the former, which are worthy of further exploration in their own right.

Broad similarities of penitential rhetoric in the two traditions can partly be explained as fulfilling similar functions (that is, these are structural and functional parallels that originate from and within roughly similar situations), but both traditions also rely on antecedent models in biblical prayers. (Parabiblical texts from the Second Temple period, those studied in volume 2 of this series, obviously do not function as direct literary models in rabbinic tradition, since they were not preserved by the rabbis,[8] although religious sensibilities, concerns, styles, and traditions from this period certainly are carried forward directly in early rabbinic materials.) The two traditions draw on, reuse, and reinterpret bibli-

8. With the notable exception of Ben Sira/Ecclesiasticus, which is drawn on in the rabbinic Yom Kippur liturgy for its depiction of the glorious appearance of the high priest as he emerges from the inner sanctuary (ch. 50).

cal paradigms, both linguistic and narrative (Lieber and Phenix and Horn refer to the lists of biblical precedents of repentance, forgiveness, and salvation that are deployed in penitential prayers, particularly hymns, in the two traditions in order to motivate divine forgiveness, though the differences between them are contextually significant: each tradition is making its own theological points).

Beyond biblical references, it is interesting that both traditions at various points make use of images of healing to characterize penitence/penance (as noted by Fine, Werline, Spinks, and Phenix and Horn). On the one hand, this represents the more general late antique identification of sin with illness (and vice versa), penitence with healing, and the religious virtuoso with the physician. But the persistence of this motif is noteworthy: in the sixteenth century, Isaac Luria, dispensing penances to his followers, is characterized as a "physician of the soul" no less than are the disciples of Jesus Christ, "the great Physician," by Efrem in the fourth century.[9] Similarly, the "penitential impulse" repeatedly manifests itself in both traditions in the form of penitential-pietistic-reformist movements that are dissatisfied with conventional piety and aim instead for greater spiritual rigor. Phenomenologically speaking, this can be understood in terms of shared psychological and social-psychological stances: a common sense of personal inadequacy vis-à-vis God's expectations, a common sense of malaise with the surrounding social realities (on the Jewish side, the persistence of the exile; on the Christian side, the persistence of this world), and a desire for religious perfection.

But there are possible (sometimes certain) local points of contact and interaction between the two traditions. Fine (pp. 140–41) and other scholars have noted, for example, that the twelfth- to thirteenth-century *ḥasidê 'aškenaz* (German Pietists) almost certainly were familiar with contemporary Christian penitential practices: the similarities between their novel and extreme (for Judaism) forms of penance and those of Christian penitentials are too strong and detailed to be merely coincidental. Similarly, the presence in sixteenth-century Safed of many *conversos* (Spanish Jews who had converted to Christianity under the threat of the Inquisition and later fled Spain to return to their Judaism), noted by Fine (p. 130 and note 5 there), might constitute the source of another link between Christian and Jewish penitential practices. So, too, the Syriac connection between Jewish and Christian liturgies, penitential and otherwise, is a particularly interesting area for further investigation. Phenix and Horn note the antecedents and models for Byzantine penitential prayers in the earlier Syriac penitential hymns, and Spinks notes that Syriac-speaking Christianity grew up "in the shadow of a strong Jewish community" (p. 223).[10] Scholars in other contexts have remarked

9. Spinks, p. 218.

10. But caution must be exercised here; Spinks's broad characterization of the East Syrian *Taksa d'Ḥussaya* as "a Semitic Christian expression of an older Jewish penitential prayer tradition" (p. 223) needs to be refined. Its use of Old Testament references and allusions as well as its inclusion of Psalms is not by itself probative, since it also uses New Testament allusions.

on the chronological overlap and broad similarities between Jewish *piyyuṭim* and Syriac Christian (as well as Byzantine Greek) hymns. As Lieber notes here, anonymously authored *piyyuṭim* (among them the *seliḥot* analyzed here) are found in the Land of Israel beginning in the fourth century. Efrem's hymns, of course, date to the fourth century. This is also the fertile period of hymns among the Samaritans (Marqah). Is there a relationship among these contemporaneous literary and liturgical phenomena? The question is only now beginning to get a thorough investigation.[11]

At the same time, we must be careful about superficial similarities that may mask more profound differences. For instance, the observation that penitential prayers in both rabbinic and early Christian liturgies figure early on in the private, individual realm (as noted appropriately by Langer and Claussen), if taken in isolation, would be, on the Jewish side, only a partial truth, since it takes no note of the prominence of the Yom Kippur and fast-day public penitential liturgies—which have no counterpart on the Christian side. It also fails to account for the differing liturgical contexts of the private penitential prayers (in rabbinic Judaism daily, as personal prayer after the Amidah in possible continuity with some pre-70 pious practices; in early Christianity periodically and locally, before the Eucharist) and their different purposes. The underlying theological *Gestalt* between the two traditions is different. Similarly, we find Luria in the sixteenth century recommending the practice of midnight vigils (Fine, 130–33), a practice known in the early church (Phenix and Horn, 239 n. 38)—but, once more, the content and theology are quite different. Yet another superficial similarity between penitential prayers in the two traditions invoked variously in the present volume by four of our authors (Werline, 171; Spinks, 214–15; and Phenix and Horn, 234) has to do with the deployment in these prayers of texts from the Psalms. The appearance of specific Psalm texts in Christian penitential prayers does not automatically indicate a customary usage borrowed from Judaism—though obviously the developing Jewish liturgies made considerable use of Psalm recitations, and such a possibility must indeed be considered; but

Further, we do not know much about the specific kind(s) of Judaism with which Aphrahat and Efrem had contact—rabbinic? non-rabbinic? See further below.

11. The pioneering work in this area is being done by Ophir Münz-Manor, most of it still unpublished. At the December 2007 annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies, he presented a paper entitled, "Many Voices, One Choir: Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan Poets and the Rise of Neo-Semitic Poetry." See also Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (2nd ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 584–86, 628–29, who argues for the primacy of Christian vis-à-vis Jewish hymnic style. The reverse argument was made by Jefim (Hayyim) Schirmann, "Hebrew Liturgical Poetry and Christian Hymnology," in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 44 (1953–54): 123–61; and Joseph Yahalom, "Piyyut as Poetry," in *The Synagogue of Late Antiquity* (ed. Lee I. Levine; Philadelphia: ASOR; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1987), 111–26.

without specific evidence the matter remains doubtful, since Christians also laid claim to the Psalter.[12]

Obviously, the present volume makes no claim to exhaustive study of the phenomenon of penitential prayer in Judaism and Christianity; there is room for many other detailed studies. With respect to Judaism, studies have been published, for example, on the innovation of penitential rituals and the penitential aspects of prayer in *ḥasidut 'aškenaz* (Fine cites the basic literature in English), but more can still be done in that area. Similarly, there is room for further study of the prayer book commentaries and books of laws and customs from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that have been influenced by Lurianic Kabbalah. Outside the bounds of rabbinic Judaism, it would be interesting to investigate the treatment of penitential prayer in Samaritan and Karaite liturgies (the latter rely heavily, though not exclusively, on biblical texts and centos and, despite Karaite opposition to rabbinic Judaism, have been influenced by its liturgical forms). With respect to Christianity, it would be interesting to pursue this topic additionally regarding those groups and forms of Christianity that were ultimately branded in the third century as heretical (gnostic, etc.). Here we are limited, of course, by the extent and nature of the surviving evidence, little of which in any event could be characterized as liturgical. But it still would be possible to examine the extent to which penitential themes and ideas figure in these materials, as Werline has done here with respect to the New Testament. And there are yet other relevant liturgical materials in the Christian tradition that have not figured in this volume on account of its chronological limits and limits of space.

In deference to the collective nature of this enterprise, which was initiated at the 2003 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and of which this

12. In a similar vein, Phenix and Horn (237) appropriately advocate a closer examination of the claim by Miguel Arranz that an expiatory prayer found in a tenth-century Euchologion might draw on, or be familiar with, the language of a rabbinic confessional prayer for Yom Kippur. Arranz's claim, plausible in principle, turns out to be more complicated on closer philological examination of the texts in question. The parallels are less precisely verbal than rhetorical and general. Arranz himself acknowledges that the first pair of verbs, *anes* and *slaḥ,* do not in fact correspond to each other with regard to their meaning (although there is closer correspondence among the other pairs) (Miguel Arranz, "Les prières penitentielles de la tradition byzantine: Les sacrements de la restauration de l'ancien Euchologie Constantinopolitain," *OCP* 57 [1991]: 87–143, here 106). Moreover, the Greek vocabulary throughout this section of the prayer is chosen partly for reasons of poetic assonance, as my colleague Adam Kamesar has graciously pointed out to me. The use of three relatively synonymous verbs in both the Hebrew and the Greek prayers is a common rhetorical technique, which by itself need not indicate dependence of the latter on the former, since it can be accounted for completely on the basis of a shared rhetorical situation. So this case illustrates the kind of parallelism that need not be the result of the dependence of one text or tradition on the other. My intent here is to highlight the complexity of resolving this issue. Suffice it to say, every case of this kind needs to be examined carefully on its own merits.

volume marks the conclusion (at least in its present form, since there is more ongoing work to do, as I have suggested above), let me end with those words with which my colleague Eileen Schuller concluded her afterword in the previous volume and which now take on greater resonance: "As we expand our data base . . . , I suspect that we are all coming to an increased appreciation of how complex and diverse are the developments in prayer in Second Temple Judaism [as well as in post-70 Judaism and in Christianity, we may now add]: formally, . . . theologically, . . . and socio-historically. . . . The goal of this consultation has never been simply to agree on a list of penitential prayers [or even, we should now remark, to agree on a rigid, hard and fast definition of such prayers that "fits" all contexts,] but to deepen our understanding of and appreciation for the lived reality of prayer in the Hebrew Bible, Second Temple Judaism, and . . . [post-70 rabbinic] Judaism and Christianity."[13] And so the work of understanding and appreciation must go on . . .

13. Eileen Schuller, "Afterword," in Boda, Falk, and Werline, *Seeking the Favor of God*, 2:236–37.

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